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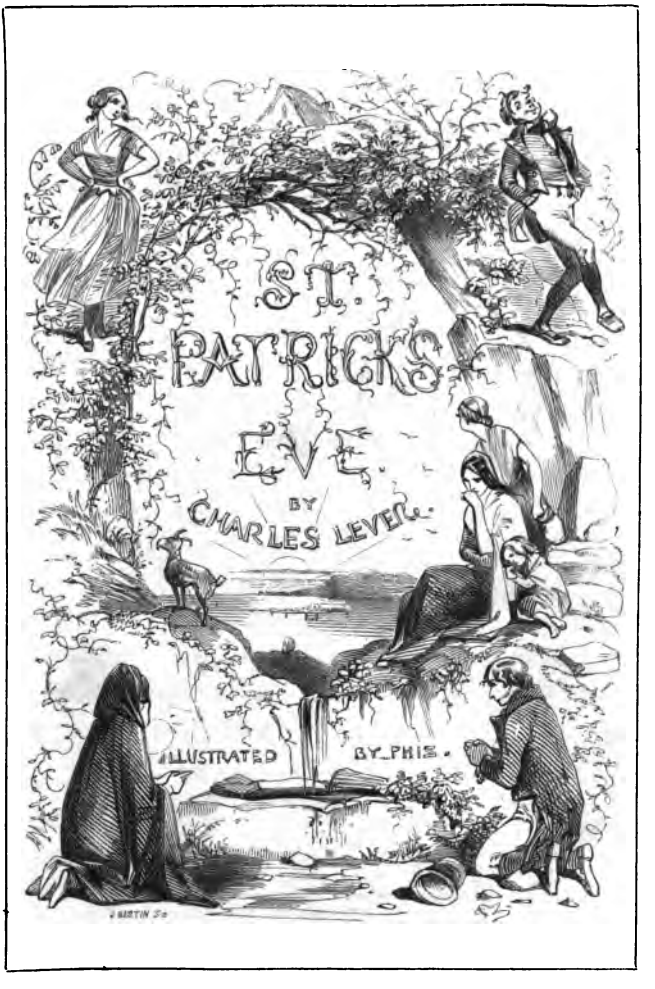

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.

To my Children.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

There are few things less likely than that it will ever be your lot to exercise any of the rights or privileges of landed property. It may chance, however, that even in your humble sphere, there may be those who shall look up to you for support, and be, in some wise, dependent on your will; if so, pray let this little story have its lesson in your hearts,—think, that when I wrote it, I desired to inculcate the truth, that prosperity has as many duties as adversity has sorrows; that those to whom Providence has accorded many blessings are but the stewards of His bounty to the poor; and that the neglect of an obligation so sacred as this charity is a grievous wrong, and may be the origin of evils for which all your efforts to do good through life will be but a poor atonement.

Your affectionate Father,

CHARLES LEVER.

TEMPLEOGUE,
March 1, 1845.

IT was on the 16th of March, the eve of St. Patrick, not quite twenty years ago, that a little village on the bank of Lough Corrib was celebrating in its annual fair "the holy times," devoting one day to every species of enjoyment and pleasure, and on the next, by practising prayers and penance of various kinds, as it were to prepare their minds to resume their worldly duties in a frame of thought more seemly and becoming.

If a great and wealthy man might smile at the humble preparations for pleasure displayed on this occasion, he

could scarcely scoff at the scene which surrounded them. The wide valley, encircled by lofty mountains, whose swelling outlines were tracked against the blue sky, or mingled gracefully with clouds, whose forms were little less fantastic and wild. The broad lake, stretching away into the distance, and either lost among the mountain-passes, or contracting as it approached the ancient city of Galway: a few, and but very few, islands marked its surface, and these rugged and rocky; on one alone a human trace was seen—the ruins of an ancient church; it was a mere gable now, but you could still track out the humble limits it had occupied—scarce space sufficient for twenty persons: such were once, doubtless, the full number of converts to the faith who frequented there. There was a wild and savage grandeur in the whole: the very aspect of the mountains proclaimed desolation, and seemed to frown defiance at the efforts of man to subdue them to his use; and even the herds of wild cattle seemed to stray with caution among the cliffs and precipices of this dreary region. Lower down, however, and as if in compensation of the infertile tract above, the valley was marked by patches of tillage and grass-land, and studded

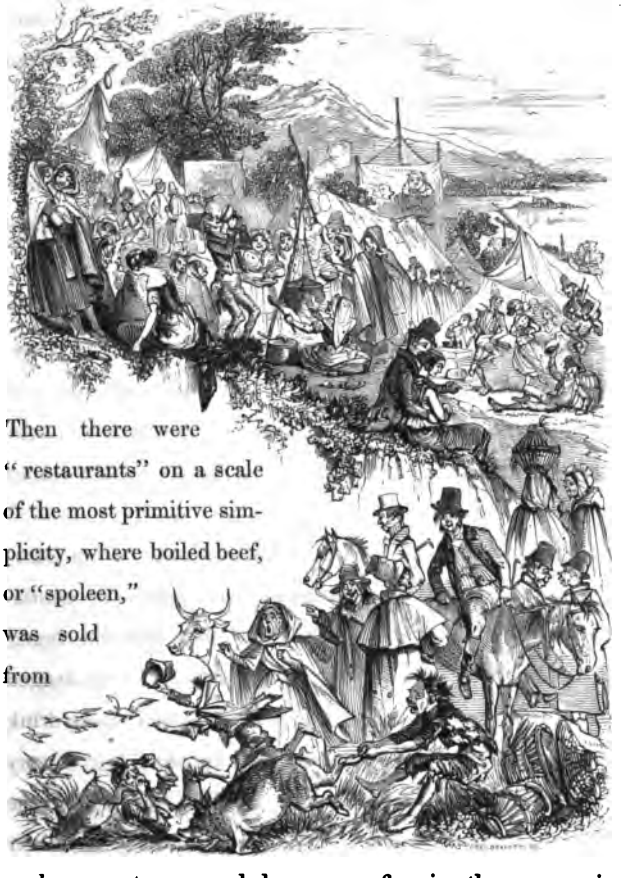
with cottages; which, if presenting at a nearer inspection indubitable signs of poverty, yet to the distant eye bespoke something of rural comfort, nestling as they often did beneath some large rock, and sheltered by the great turf-stack, which even the poorest possessed. Many streams wound their course through this valley; along whose borders, amid a pasture brighter than the emerald, the cattle grazed, and there, from time to time some peasant child sat fishing as he watched the herd.

Shut in by lake and mountain, this seemed a little spot apart from all the world; and so, indeed, its inhabitants found it. They were a poor but not unhappy race of people, whose humble lives had taught them nothing of the comforts and pleasures of richer communities. Poverty had, from habit, no terrors for them; short of actual want, they never felt its pressure heavily.

Such were they who now were assembled to celebrate the festival of their Patron Saint. It was drawing towards evening; the sun was already low, and the red glare that shone from behind the mountains shewed that he was near his setting. The business of the fair was almost concluded; the little traffic so remote a region could supply,

the barter of a few sheep, the sale of a heifer, a mountain pony, or a flock of goats, had all passed off; and now the pleasures of the occasion were about to succeed. The votaries to amusement, as if annoyed at the protracted dealings of the more worldly minded, were somewhat rudely driving away the cattle that still continued to linger about; and pigs and poultry were beginning to discover that they were merely intruders. The canvass booths, erected as shelter against the night-air, were becoming crowded with visitors; and from more than one of the number the pleasant sounds of the bagpipe might now be heard, accompanied by the dull shuffling tramp of heavily-shod feet.

Various shows and exhibitions were also in preparation, and singular announcements were made by gentlemen in a mingled costume of Turk and Thimble-rigger, of "wonderful calves with two heads;" "six-legged pigs;" and an "infant of two years old that could drink a quart of spirits at a draught, if a respectable company were assembled to witness it;"—a feat which, for the honour of young Ireland, it should be added, was ever postponed from a deficiency in the annexed condition.



Then there were "restaurants" on a scale of the most primitive simplicity, where boiled beef, or "spoleen," was sold from

a huge pot, suspended over a fire in the open air,

and which was invariably surrounded by a gourmand party of both sexes; gingerbread and cakes of every fashion and every degree of indigestion also abounded; while jugs and kegs flanked the entrance to each tent, reeking with a most unmistakable odour of that prime promoter of native drollery and fun—poteen. All was stir, movement, and bustle; old friends, separated since the last occasion of a similar festivity, were embracing cordially, the men kissing with an affectionate warmth no German ever equalled; pledges of love and friendship were taken in brimming glasses by many, who were perhaps to renew the opportunity for such testimonies hereafter, by a fight that very evening; contracts, ratified by whisky, until that moment not deemed binding; and courtships, prosecuted with hopes, which the whole year previous had never suggested; kind speeches and words of welcome went round; while here and there some closely-gathered heads and scowling glances gave token, that other scores were to be acquitted on that night than merely those of commerce; and in the firmly knitted brow, and more firmly grasped blackthorn, a practised observer could foresee, that some heads were to carry

away deeper marks of that meeting, than simple memory can impress; — and thus, in this wild sequestered spot, human passions were as rife as in the most busy communities of pampered civilisation. Love, hate, and hope, charity, fear, forgiveness, and malice; long-smouldering revenge, long-subdued affection; hearts pining beneath daily drudgery, suddenly awakened to a burst of pleasure and a renewal of happiness in the sight of old friends, for many a day lost sight of; words of good cheer; half mutterings of menace; the whispered syllables of love; the deeply-uttered tones of vengeance; and amid all, the careless reckless glee of those, who appeared to feel the hour one snatched from the grasp of misery, and devoted to the very abandonment of pleasure. It seemed in vain that want and poverty had shed their chilling influence over hearts like these. The snow-drift and the storm might penetrate their frail dwellings; the winter might blast, the hurricane might scatter their humble hoardings; but still, the bold high-beating spirit that lived within, beamed on throughout every trial; and now, in the hour of long-sought enjoyment, blazed forth in a flame of joy, that was all but frantic.

The step that but yesterday fell wearily upon the ground, now smote the earth with a proud beat, that told of manhood's daring; the voices were high, the eyes were flashing; long pent-up emotions of every shade and complexion were there; and it seemed a season where none should wear disguise, but stand forth in all the fearlessness of avowed resolve; and in the heart-home looks of love, as well as in the fiery glances of hatred, none practised concealment. Here, went one with his arm round his sweetheart's waist,—an evidence of accepted affection none dared even to stare at; there, went another, the skirt of his long loose coat thrown over his arm, in whose hand a stick was brandished—his gesture, even without his wild hurroo! an open declaration of battle, a challenge to all who liked it. Mothers were met in close conclave, interchanging family secrets and cares; and daughters, half conscious of the parts they themselves were playing in the converse, passed looks of sly intelligence to each other. And beggars were there too—beggars of a class which even the eastern Dervish can scarcely vie with: cripples brought many a mile away from their mountain-homes to extort charity by exhibitions of dreadful de-

formity; the halt, the blind, the muttering idiot, the moping melanc holy mad, mixedup with strange and motley figures in patched uniforms and rags—some, amusing the crowd by their drolleries, some, singing a popular ballad of the time—while through all, at every turn and every corner, one huge fellow, without legs, rode upon an ass, his wide chest ornamented by a picture of himself,

and a paragraph setting forth his infirmities. He, with a voice deeper than a bassoon, bellowed forth his prayer for alms, and seemed to monopolise far more than his proportion of charity, doubtless owing to the more artistic development to which he had brought his profession. "De prayers of de holy Joseph be an yez, and relieve de maimed; de prayers and blessins of all de Saints on dem that assists de sufferin!" And there were pilgrims, some with heads venerable enough for the canvass of an old master, with flowing beards, and relics hung round their necks, objects of worship which failed not to create sentiments of devotion in the passers-by. But among these many sights and sounds, each calculated to appeal to different classes and ages of the motley mass, one object appeared to engross a more than ordinary share of attention; and although certainly not of a nature to draw marked notice elsewhere, was here sufficiently strange and uncommon to become actually a spectacle. This was neither more nor less than an English groom, who, mounted upon a thorough-bred horse, led another by the bridle, and slowly paraded backwards and forwards, in attendance on his master.

"Them's the iligant bastes, Darby," said one of the bystanders, as the horses moved past. "A finer pair than that I never seen."

"They're beauties, and no denying it," said the other; "and they've skins like a looking-glass."

"Arrah, botheration t' yez! what are ye saying about their skins?" cried a third, whose dress and manner betokened one of the rank of a small farmer. "'Tis the breeding that's in 'em; that's the raal beauty. Only look at their pasterns; and see how fine they run off over the quarter."

"Which is the best now, Phil?" said another, addressing the last speaker with a tone of some deference.

"The grey horse is worth two of the dark chesnut," replied Phil oracularly.

"Is he, then!" cried two or three in a breath. "Why is that, Phil?"

"Can't you perceive the signs of blood about the ears? They're long, and coming to a point"——

"You're wrong this time, my friend," said a sharp voice, with an accent which in Ireland would be called English. "You may be an excellent judge of an ass, but

the horse you speak of, as the best, is not worth a fourth part of the value of the other." And so saying, a young and handsome man, attired in a riding costume, brushed somewhat rudely through the crowd, and seizing the rein of the led horse, vaulted lightly into the saddle and rode off, leaving Phil to the mockery and laughter of the crowd, whose reverence for the opinion of a gentleman was only beneath that they accorded to the priest himself.

"Faix, ye got it there, Phil!" "'Tis down on ye he was that time!" "Musha, but ye may well get red in the face!" Such and such-like were the comments on one who but a moment before was rather a popular candidate for public honours.

"Who is he, then, at all?" said one among the rest, and who had come up too late to witness the scene.

"'Tis the young Mr. Leslie, the landlord's son, that's come over to fish the lakes," replied an old man reverentially.

"Begorra, he's no landlord of mine, anyhow," said Phil, now speaking for the first time. "I hould under Mister Martin, and his family was here before the Leslies was heard of." These words were said with a certain

air of defiance, and a turn of the head around him, as though to imply, that if any one would gainsay the opinion, he was ready to stand by and maintain it. Happily for the peace of the particular moment, the crowd were nearly all Martins, and so, a simple buzz of approbation followed this announcement. Nor did their attention dwell much longer on the matter, as most were already occupied in watching the progress of the young man, who, at a fast swinging gallop, had taken to the fields beside the lake, and was now seen flying in succession over each dyke and wall before him, followed by his groom. The Irish passion for feats of horsemanship made this the most fascinating attraction of the fair; and already, opinions ran high among the crowd, that it was a race between the two horses, and more than one maintained, that "the little chap with the belt" was the better horseman of the two. At last, having made a wide circuit of the village and the green, the riders were seen slowly moving down, as if returning to the fair.

There is no country where manly sports and daring exercises are held in higher repute than Ireland. The chivalry that has died out in richer lands still reigns

there; and the full meed of approbation will ever be his, who can combine address and courage before an Irish crowd. It is needless to say, then, that many a word of praise and commendation was bestowed on young Leslie. His handsome features, his slight but well-formed figure, every particular of his dress and gesture, had found an advocate and an admirer; and while some were lavish in their epithets on the perfection of his horsemanship, others, who had seen him on foot, asserted, "that it was then he looked well entirely." There is a kind of epidemic character pertaining to praise. The snow-ball gathers not faster by rolling, than do the words of eulogy and approbation; and so now, many recited little anecdotes of the youth's father, to shew that he was a very pattern of landlords and country gentlemen, and had only one fault in life,—that he never lived among his tenantry.

"'Tis the first time I ever set eyes on him," cried one, "and I hould my little place under him twenty-three years come Michaelmas."

"See now then, Barney," cried another, "I'd rather have a hard man that would stay here among us, than the finest landlord ever was seen that would be away from

us. And what's the use of compassion and pity when the say would be between us? 'Tis the Agent we have to look to."

"Agent! 'Tis wishing them, I am, the same Agents! Them's the boys has no marcy for a poor man: I'm tould now"—and here the speaker assumed a tone of oracular seriousness that drew several listeners towards him—"I'm tould now, the Agents get a guinea for every man, woman, and child they turn out of a houldin." A low murmur of indignant anger ran through the group, not one of whom ventured to disbelieve a testimony thus accredited.

"And sure when the landlords does come, devil a bit they know about us—no more nor if we were in Swayden; didn't I hear the ould gentleman down there last summer, pitying the people for the distress. 'Ah,' says he, 'it's a hard sayson ye have, and obliged to tear the flax out of the ground, and it not long enough to cut!'"

A ready burst of laughter followed this anecdote, and many similar stories were recounted in corroboration of the opinion.

"That's the girl takes the shine out of the fair," said one of the younger men of the party, touching another by

the arm, and pointing to a tall young girl, who, with features as straight and regular as a classic model, moved slowly past. She did not wear the scarlet cloak of the

peasantry, but a large one of dark blue, lined with silk of the same colour; a profusion of brown hair, dark and glossy, was braided on each side of her face, and turned

up at the back of the head with the grace of an antique cameo. She seemed not more than nineteen years of age, and in the gaze of astonishment and pleasure she threw around her, it might be seen how new such scenes and sights were to her.

"That's Phil Joyce's sister, and a crooked disciple of a brother she has," said the other; "sorra bit if he'd ever let her come to the 'pattern' afore to-day; and she's the raal ornament of the place now she's in it."

"Just mind Phil, will ye! watch him now; see the frown he's giving the boys as they go by, for looking at his sister. I wouldn't coort a girl that I couldn't look in the face and see what was in it, av she owned Ballinahinch Castle," said the former.

"There now; what is he at now?" whispered the other; "he's left her in the tent there: and look at him, the way he's talking to ould Bill; he's telling him something about a fight; never mind me agin, but there'll be 'wigs on the green' this night."

"I don't know where the Lynchs and the Connors is to-day," said the other, casting a suspicious look around him, as if anxious to calculate the forces available in the

event of a row. "They gave the Joyces their own in Ballinrobe last fair. I hope they're not afeard to come down here."

"Sorra bit, ma bouchal," said a voice from behind his shoulder; and at the same moment the speaker clapped his hands over the other's eyes: "Who am I, now?"

"Arrah! Owen Connor; I know ye well," said the other; "and 'tis yourself ought not to be here to-day. The ould father of ye has nobody but yourself to look after him."

"I'd like to see ye call him ould to his face," said Owen, laughing: "there he is now, in Poll Dawley's tent, dancing."

"Dancing!" cried the other two in a breath.

"Aye, faix, dancing 'The little bould fox;' and may I never die in sin, if he hasn't a step that looks for all the world as if he made a hook and eye of his legs."

The young man who spoke these words was in mould and gesture the very ideal of an Irish peasant of the west; somewhat above the middle size, rather slightly made, but with the light and neatly turned proportion that betokens activity, more than great strength, endurance, rather than

the power of any single effort. His face well became the character of his figure; it was a handsome and an open one, where the expressions changed and crossed each other with lightning speed, now, beaming with good nature, now, flashing in anger, now, sparkling with some witty conception, or frowning a bold defiance as it met the glance of some member of a rival faction. He looked, as he was, one ready and willing to accept either part from fortune, and to exchange friendship and hard knocks with equal satisfaction. Although in dress and appearance he was both cleanly and well clad, it was evident that he belonged to a very humble class among the peasantry. Neither his hat nor his greatcoat, those unerring signs of competence, had been new for many a day before; and his shoes, in their patched and mended condition, betrayed the pains it had cost him to make even so respectable an appearance as he then presented.

"She didn't even give you a look to-day, Owen," said one of the former speakers; "she turned her head the other way as she went by."

"Faix, I'm afeard ye've a bad chance," said the other, slily.

"Joke away, boys, and welcome," said Owen, reddening to the eyes as he spoke, and shewing that his indifference to their banterings was very far from being real; "'tis little I mind what ye say,—as little as she herself would mind *me*," added he to himself.

"She's the purtiest girl in the town-land, and no second word to it,—and even if she hadn't a fortune ——"

"Bad luck to the fortune!—that's what I say," cried Owen, suddenly; "'tis that same that breaks my rest night and day; sure if it wasn't for the money, there's many a dacent boy wouldn't be ashamed nor afeard to go up and coort her."

"She'll have two hundred, divil a less, I'm tould," interposed the other; "the ould man made a deal of money in the war-time."

"I wish he had it with him now," said Owen, bitterly.

"By all accounts he wouldn't mislike it himself. When Father John was giving him the rites, he says, 'Phil,' says he, 'how ould are ye now?' and the other didn't hear him, but went on muttering to himself; and the Priest says agin, ''Tis how ould you are, I'm axing.' 'A hundred and forty-three,' says Phil, looking up at him. 'The

Saints be good to us,' says Father John, 'sure you're not that ould,—a hundred and forty-three?' 'A hundred and forty-seven.' 'Phew! he's more of it—a hundred and forty-seven!' 'A hundred and fifty,' cries Phil, and he gave the foot of the bed a little kick, this way—sorra more—and he died; and what was it but the guineas he was countin' in a stocking under the clothes all the while? Oh, musha! how his sowl was in the money, and he going to leave it all! I heerd Father John say, 'it was well they found it out, for there'd be a curse on them guineas, and every hand that would touch one of them *in secla seclorum;*' and they wer' all tuck away in a bag that night, and buried by the Priest in a saycret place, where they'll never be found till the Day of Judgment."

Just as the story came to its end, the attention of the group was drawn off by seeing numbers of people running in a particular direction, while the sound of voices and the general excitement shewed something new was going forward. The noise increased, and now, loud shouts were heard, mingled with the rattling of sticks and the utterance of those party cries so popular in an Irish fair. The young men stood still as if the affair was a mere momen-

tary ebullition not deserving of attention, nor sufficiently important to merit the taking any farther interest in it; nor did they swerve from the resolve thus tacitly formed, as from time to time some three or four would emerge from the crowd, leading forth one, whose bleeding temples, or smashed head, made retreat no longer dishonourable.

"They're at it early," was the cool commentary of Owen Connor, as with a smile of superciliousness he looked towards the scene of strife.

"The Joyces is always the first to begin," remarked one of his companions.

"And the first to lave off too," said Owen; "two to one is what they call fair play."

"That's Phil's voice!—there now, do you hear him shouting?"

"'Tis that he's best at," said Owen, whose love for the pretty Mary Joyce was scarcely equalled by his dislike of her ill-tempered brother.

At this moment the shouts became louder and wilder, the screams of the women mingling with the uproar, which no longer seemed a mere passing skirmish, but a downright severe engagement.

"What is it all about, Christy?" said Owen, to a young fellow led past between two friends, while the track of blood marked every step he went.

"'Tis well it becomes yez to ax," muttered the other, with his swollen and pallid lips, "when the Martins is beating your landlord's eldest son to smithereens."

"Mr. Leslie—young Mr. Leslie?" cried the three together; but a wild war-whoop from the crowd gave the answer back. "Hurroo! Martin for ever! Down with the Leslies! Ballinashough! Hurroo! Don't leave one of them living! Beat their sowles out!"

"Leslie for ever!" yelled out Owen, with a voice heard over every part of the field; and with a spring into the air, and a wild flourish of his stick, he dashed into the crowd.

"Here's Owen Connor, make way for Owen;" cried the non-combatants, as they jostled and parted each other, to leave a free passage for one whose prowess was well known.

"He'll lave his mark on some of yez yet!" "That's the boy will give you music to dance to!" "Take that, Barney!" "Ha! Terry, that made your nob ring like a

forty-shilling pot!" Such and such-like were the comments on him who now, reckless of his own safety, rushed madly into the very midst of the combatants, and fought his way onwards to where some seven or eight were desperately engaged over the fallen figure of a man. With a shrill yell no Indian could surpass, and a bound like a tiger, Owen came down in the midst of them, every stroke of his powerful blackthorn telling on his man as unerringly as though it were wielded by the hand of a giant.

"Save the young Master, Owen! Shelter him! Stand over him, Owen Connor!" were now the cries from all sides; and the stout-hearted peasant, striding over the body of young Leslie, cleared a space around him, and, as he glanced defiance on all sides, called out, "Is that your courage, to beat a young gentleman that never handled a stick in his life? Oh, you cowardly set! Come and face the men of your own barony if you dare! Come out on the green and do it!—Pull him away—pull him away quick," whispered he to his own party eagerly. "Tear-an-ages! get him out of this before they're down on me."

As he spoke, the Joyces rushed forward with a cheer,

The Rescue.

London: Chapman & Hall 186 Strand.

their party now trebly as strong as the enemy. They bore down with a force that nothing could resist. Poor Owen — the mark for every weapon — fell almost the first, his head and face one undistinguishable mass of blood and bruises, but not before some three or four of his friends had rescued young Leslie from his danger, and carried him to the outskirts of the fair. The fray now became general, neutrality was impossible, and self-defence almost suggested some participation in the battle. The victory was, however, with the Joyces. They were on their own territory; they mustered every moment stronger; and in less than half an hour they had swept the enemy from the field, save where a lingering wounded man remained, whose maimed and crippled condition had already removed him from all the animosities of combat.

"Where's the young master?" were the first words Owen Connor spoke, as his friends carried him on the door of a cabin, hastily unhinged for the purpose, towards his home.

"Erra! he's safe enough, Owen," said one of his bearers, who was by no means pleased that Mr. Leslie

had made the best of his way out of the fair, instead of remaining to see the fight out.

"God be praised for that same, anyhow!" said Owen piously. "His life was not worth a 'trawneen' when I seen him first."

It may be supposed from this speech, and the previous conduct of him who uttered it, that Owen Connor was an old and devoted adherent of the Leslie family, from whom he had received many benefits, and to whom he was linked by long acquaintance. Far from it. He neither knew Mr. Leslie nor his father. The former he saw for the first time as he stood over him in the fair; the latter he had never so much as set eyes upon, at any time; neither had he or his been favoured by them. The sole tie that subsisted between them — the one link that bound the poor man to the rich one — was that of the tenant to his landlord. Owen's father and grandfather before him had been cottiers on the estate; but being very poor and humble men, and the little farm they rented, a half-tilled half-reclaimed mountain tract, exempt from all prospect of improvement, and situated in a remote and unfrequented place, they were merely known by their names on the

rent-roll. Except for this, their existence had been as totally forgotten, as though they had made part of the wild heath upon the mountain.

While Mr. Leslie lived in ignorance that such people existed on his property, they looked up to him with a degree of reverence almost devotional. The owner of the soil was a character actually sacred in their eyes; for what respect and what submission were enough for one, who held in his hands the destinies of so many; who could raise them to affluence, or depress them to want, and by his mere word control the Agent himself, the most dreaded of all those who exerted an influence on their fortunes?

There was a feudalism, too, in this sentiment that gave the reverence a feeling of strong allegiance. The landlord was the head of a clan, as it were; he was the culminating point of that pyramid of which they formed the base; and they were proud of every display of his wealth and his power, which they deemed as ever reflecting credit upon themselves. And then, his position in the county—his rank—his titles—the amount of his property—his house—his retinue—his very equipage, were all subjects on which they descanted with eager delight, and proudly

exalted in contrast with less favoured proprietors. At the time we speak of, absenteeism had only begun to impair the warmth of this affection; the traditions of a resident landlord were yet fresh in the memory of the young; and a hundred traits of kindness and good-nature were mingled in their minds with stories of grandeur and extravagance, which, to the Irish peasant's ear, are themes as grateful as ever the gorgeous pictures of Eastern splendour were to the heightened imagination and burning fancies of Oriental listeners.

Owen Connor was a firm disciple of this creed. Perhaps his lone sequestered life among the mountains, with no companionship save that of his old father, had made him longer retain these convictions in all their force, than if, by admixture with his equals, and greater intercourse with the world, he had conformed his opinions to the gradually changed tone of the country. It was of little moment to him what might be the temper or the habits of his landlord. The monarchy—and not the monarch of the soil—was the object of his loyalty; and he would have deemed himself disgraced and dishonoured had he shewn the slightest backwardness in his fealty. He

would as soon have expected that the tall fern that grew wild in the valley should have changed into a blooming crop of wheat, as that the performance of such a service could have met with any requital. It was, to his thinking, a simple act of duty, and required not any prompting of high principle, still less any suggestion of self-interest. Poor Owen, therefore, had not even a sentiment of heroism to cheer him, as they bore him slowly along, every inequality of the ground sending a pang through his aching head that was actually torture.

"That's a mark you'll carry to your dying day, Owen, my boy," said one of the bearers, as they stopped for a moment to take breath. "I can see the bone there shining this minute."

"It must be good stuff anyways the same head," said Owen, with a sickly attempt to smile. "They never put a star in it yet; and faix I seen the sticks cracking like dry wood in the frost."

"It's well it didn't come lower down," said another, examining the deep cut, which gashed his forehead from the hair down to the eyebrow. "You know what the Widow Glynn said at Peter Henessy's wake, when she

saw the stroke of the scythe that laid his head open—it just come, like yer own, down to that—'Ayeh!' says she, 'but he's the fine corpse; and wasn't it the Lord spared his eye!'"

"Stop, and good luck to you, Freney, and don't be making me laugh; the pain goes through my brain like the stick of a knife," said Owen, as he lifted his trembling hands and pressed them on either side of his head.

They wetted his lips with water, and resumed their way, not speaking aloud as before, but in a low undertone, only audible to Owen at intervals; for he had sunk into a half-stupid state, they believed to be sleep. The path each moment grew steeper; for, leaving the wild "boreen" road, which led to a large bog on the mountainside, it wound now upwards, zigzaging between masses of granite rock and deep tufts of heather, where sometimes the foot sunk to the instep. The wet and spongy soil increased the difficulty greatly; and although all strong and powerful men, they were often obliged to halt and rest themselves.

"It's an elegant view, sure enough," said one, wiping his dripping forehead with the tail of his coat. "See

there! look down where the fair is, now! it isn't the size of a good griddle, the whole of it. How purty the lights look shining in the water!"

"And the boats, too! Musha! they're coming up more of them. There'll be good divarshin there, this night." These last words, uttered with a half sigh, shewed with what a heavy heart the speaker saw himself debarred from participating in the festivity.

"'Twas a dhroll place to build a house then, up there," said another, pointing to the dark speck, far, far away on the mountain, where Owen Connor's cabin stood.

"Owen says yez can see Galway of a fine day, and the boats going out from the Claddagh; and of an evening, when the sun is going down, you'll see across the bay, over to Clare, the big cliffs of Mogher."

"Now, then! are ye in earnest? I don't wonder he's so fond of the place after all. It's an elegant thing to see the whole world, and fine company besides. Look at Lough Mask! Now, boys, isn't that beautiful with the sun on it?"

"Come, it's getting late, Freney, and the poor boy

ought to be at home before night;" and once more they lifted their burden and moved forward.

For a considerable time they continued to ascend without speaking, when one of the party in a low cautious voice remarked, "Poor Owen will think worse of it, when he hears the reason of the fight, than for the cut on the head—bad as it is."

"Musha; then he needn't," replied another; "for if ye mane about Mary Joyce, he never had a chance of her."

"I'm not saying that he had," said the first speaker; "but he's just as fond of her; do you mind the way he never gave back one of Phil's blows, but let him hammer away as fast as he plazed?"

"What was it at all, that Mr. Leslie did?" asked another; "I didn't hear how it begun yet."

"Nor I either, rightly; but I believe Mary was standing looking at the dance, for she never foots a step herself—maybe she's too ginteel—and the young gentleman comes up and axes her for a partner; and something she said; but what does he do, but put his arm round her waist and gives her a kiss; and, ye see, the other girls laughed hearty, because they say, Mary's so proud and high, and

thinking herself above them all. Phil wasn't there at the time; but he heerd it afterwards, and come up to the tent, as young Mr. Leslie was laving it, and stood before him and wouldn't let him pass. 'I've a word to say to ye,' says Phil, and he scarce able to spake with passion; 'that was my sister ye had the impudence to take a liberty with.' 'Out of the way, ye bogtrotter,' says Leslie: them's the very words he said; 'out of the way, ye bogtrotter, or I'll lay my whip across your shoulders.' 'Take that first,' says Phil; and he put his fist between his two eyes, neat and clean;—down went the Squire as if he was shot. You know the rest yourselves. The boys didn't lose any time, and if 'twas only two hours later, maybe the Joyces would have got as good as they gave."

A heavy groan from poor Owen now stopped the conversation, and they halted to ascertain if he were worse,—but no; he seemed still sunk in the same heavy sleep as before, and apparently unconscious of all about him. Such, however, was not really the case; by some strange phenomenon of sickness, the ear had taken in each low and whispered word, at the time it would have been deaf to louder sounds; and every syllable they had spoken had

already sunk deeply into his heart; happily for him, this was but a momentary pang; the grief stunned him at once, and he became insensible.

It was dark night as they reached the lonely cabin where Owen lived, miles away from any other dwelling, and standing at an elevation of more than a thousand feet above the plain. The short, sharp barking of a sheep-dog was the only sound that welcomed them; for the old man had not heard of his son's misfortune until long after they quitted the fair. The door was hasped and fastened with a stick; precaution enough in such a place, and for all that it contained, too. Opening this, they carried the young man in, and laid him upon the bed; and, while some busied themselves in kindling a fire upon the hearth, the others endeavoured, with such skill as they possessed, to dress his wounds, an operation which, if not strictly surgical in all its details, had at least the recommendation of tolerable experience in such matters.

"It's a nate little place when you're at it, then," said one of them, as with a piece of lighted bog-pine he took a very leisurely and accurate view of the interior.

The opinion, however, must be taken by the reader, as

rather reflecting on the judgment of him who pronounced it, than in absolute praise of the object itself. The cabin consisted of a single room, and which, though remarkably clean in comparison with similar ones, had no evidence of anything above very narrow circumstances. A little dresser occupied the wall in front of the door, with its usual complement of crockery, cracked and whole; an old chest of drawers, the pride of the house, flanked this on one side; a low settle-bed on the other; various prints in very florid colouring decorated the walls, all religious subjects, where the Apostles figured in garments like bathing-dresses; these were intermixed with ballads, dying speeches, and such-like ghostly literature, as form the most interesting reading of an Irish peasant; a few seats of unpainted deal, and a large straw chair for the old man, were the principal articles of furniture. There was a gun, minus the lock, suspended over the fireplace; and two fishing-rods, with a gaff and landing-net, were stretched upon wooden pegs; while over the bed was an earthenware crucifix, with its little cup beneath, for holy water; the whole surmounted by a picture of St. Francis Xavier in the act of blessing somebody: though, if the gesture were to be under-

stood without the explanatory letter-press, he rather looked like a swimmer preparing for a dive. The oars, mast, and spritsail of a boat were lashed to the rafters overhead; for, strange as it may seem, there was a lake at that elevation of the mountain, and one which abounded in trout and perch, affording many a day's sport to both Owen and his father.

Such were the details which, sheltered beneath a warm roof of mountain-fern, called forth the praise we have mentioned; and, poor as they may seem to the reader, they were many degrees in comfort beyond the majority of Irish cabins.

The boys—for so the unmarried men of whatever age are called—having left one of the party to watch over Owen, now quitted the house, and began their return homeward. It was past midnight when the old man returned; and although endeavouring to master any appearance of emotion before the "strange boy," he could with difficulty control his feelings on beholding his son. The shirt matted with blood, contrasting with the livid colourless cheek — the heavy irregular breathing — the frequent startings as he slept—were all sore trials to the old man's

nerve; but he managed to seem calm and collected, and to treat the occurrence as an ordinary one.

"Harry Joyce and his brother Luke—big Luke as they call him—has sore bones to-night; they tell me that Owen didn't lave breath in their bodies," said he, with a grim smile, as he took his place by the fire.

"I heerd the ribs of them smashing like an ould turf creel," replied the other.

"'Tis himself can do it," said the old fellow, with eyes glistening with delight; "fair play and good ground, and I'd back him agin the Glen."

"And so you might, and farther too; he has the speret in him—that's better nor strength, any day."

And thus consoled by the recollection of Owen's prowess, and gratified by the hearty concurrence of his guest, the old father smoked and chatted away till daybreak. It was not that he felt any want of affection for his son, or that his heart was untouched by the sad spectacle he presented, —far from this; the poor old man had no other tie to life—no other object of hope or love than Owen; but years of a solitary life had taught him rather to conceal his emotions within his own bosom, than seek for conso-

lation beyond it; besides that, even in his grief the old sentiment of faction-hatred was strong, and vengeance had its share in his thoughts also.

It would form no part of our object in this story, to dwell longer either on this theme, or the subject of Owen's illness; it will be enough to say, that he soon got better, far sooner perhaps than if all the appliances of luxury had ministered to his recovery; most certainly sooner than if his brain had been ordinarily occupied by thoughts and cares of a higher order than his were. The conflict, however, had left a deeper scar behind, than the ghastly wound that marked his brow. The poor fellow dwelt upon the portions of the conversation he overheard as they carried him up the mountain; and whatever might have been his fears before, now he was convinced that all prospect of gaining Mary's love was lost to him for ever.

This depression, natural to one after so severe an injury, excited little remark from the old man; and although he wished Owen might make some effort to exert himself, or even move about in the air, he left him to himself and his own time, well knowing that he never

was disposed to yield an hour to sickness, beyond what he felt unavoidable.

It was about eight or nine days after the fair, that the father was sitting mending a fishing-net at the door of his cabin, to catch the last light of the fading day. Owen was seated near him, sometimes watching the progress of the work, sometimes patting the old sheep-dog that nestled close by, when the sound of voices attracted them: they listened, and could distinctly hear persons talking at the opposite side of the cliff, along which the pathway led; and before they could even hazard a guess as to who they were, the strangers appeared at the angle of the rock. The party consisted of two persons; one, a gentleman somewhat advanced in life, mounted on a stout but rough-looking pony—the other, was a countryman, who held the beast by the bridle, and seemed to take the greatest precaution for the rider's safety.

The very few visitors Owen and his father met with were for the most part people coming to fish the mountain-lake, who usually hired ponies in the valley for the ascent; so that when they perceived the animal coming slowly along, they scarce bestowed a second

glance upon them, the old man merely remarking, "They're three weeks too early for this water, any how;" a sentiment concurred in by his son. In less than five minutes after, the rider and his guide stood before the door.

"Is this where Owen Connor lives?" asked the gentleman.

"That same, yer honor," said old Owen, uncovering his head, as he rose respectfully from his low stool.

"And where is Owen Connor himself?"

"'Tis me, sir," replied he; "that's my name."

"Yes, but it can scarcely be you that I am looking for; have you a son of that name?"

"Yes, sir, I'm young Owen," said the young man, rising, but not without difficulty; while he steadied himself by holding the door-post.

"So then I am all right: Tracy, lead the pony about, till I call you;" and so saying, he dismounted and entered the cabin.

"Sit down, Owen; yes, yes — I insist upon it, and do you, also. I have come up here to-day to have a few moments' talk with you about an occurrence that

took place last week at the fair. There was a young gentleman, Mr. Leslie, got roughly treated by some of the people: let me hear your account of it."

Owen and his father exchanged glances; the same idea flashed across the minds of both, that the visitor was a magistrate come to take information against the Joyces for an assault; and however gladly they would have embraced any course that promised retaliation for their injuries, the notion of recurring to the law was a degree of baseness they would have scorned to adopt.

"I'll take the 'vestment' I never seen it at all," said the old man eagerly, and evidently delighted that no manner of cross-questioning or badgering could convert him into an informer.

"And the little I saw," said Owen, "they knocked out of my memory with this;" and he pointed to the half-healed gash on his forehead.

"But you know something of how the row begun?"

"No, yer honor, I was at the other side of the fair."

"Was young Mr. Leslie in fault — did you hear that?"

"I never heerd that he did any thing—unagreeable," said Owen, after hesitating for a few seconds in his choice of a word.

"So then, I'm not likely to obtain any information from either of you."

They made no reply, but their looks gave as palpable a concurrence to this speech, as though they swore to its truth.

"Well, I have another question to ask. It was you saved this young gentleman, I understand; what was your motive for doing so? when, as by your own confession, you were at a distance when the fight begun."

"He was my landlord's son," said Owen, half roughly; "I hope there is no law agin that."

"I sincerely trust not," ejaculated the gentleman; "have you been long on the estate?"

"Three generations of us now, yer honor," said the old man.

"And what rent do you pay?"

"Oh, musha, we pay enough! we pay fifteen shillings an acre for the bit of callows below, near the lake, and we give ten pounds a year for the mountain—and

bad luck to it for a mountain — it's breaking my heart, trying to make something out of it."

"Then I suppose you'd be well pleased to exchange your farm, and take one in a better and more profitable part of the country?"

Another suspicion here shot across the old man's mind; and turning to Owen he said in Irish: "He wants to get the mountain for sporting over; but I'll not lave it."

The gentleman repeated his question.

"Troth, no then, yer honor; we've lived here so long we'll just stay our time in it."

"But the rent is heavy, you say."

"Well, we'll pay it, plaze God."

"And I'm sure it's a strange wild place in winter."

"Its wholesome, any how," was the short reply.

"I believe I must go back again as wise as I came," muttered the gentleman. "Come, my good old man,— and you, Owen; I want to know how I can best serve you, for what you've done for me: it was my son you rescued in the fair —"

"Are you the landlord — is yer honor Mr. Leslie?"

exclaimed both as they rose from their seats, as horrified as if they had taken such a liberty before Royalty.

"Yes, Owen; and I grieve to say, that I should cause so much surprise to any tenant, at seeing me. I ought to be better known on my property; and I hope to become so: but it grows late, and I must reach the valley before night. Tell me, are you really attached to this farm, or have I any other, out of lease at this time, you like better?"

"I would not leave the ould spot, with yer honor's permission, to get a demesne and a brick house; nor Owen neither."

"Well, then, be it so; I can only say, if you ever change your mind, you'll find me both ready and willing to serve you; meanwhile you must pay no more rent, here."

"No more rent!"

"Not a farthing; I'm sorry the favour is so slight a one, for indeed the mountain seems a bleak and profitless tract."

"There is not its equal for mutton—"

"I'm glad of it, Owen; and it only remains for me

to make the shepherd something more comfortable; — well, take this; and when I next come up here, which I intend to do, to fish the lake, I hope to find you in a better house;" and he pressed a pocket-book into the old man's hand as he said this, and left the cabin: while both Owen and his father were barely able to mutter a blessing upon him, so overwhelming and unexpected was the whole occurrence.

FROM no man's life, perhaps, is hope more rigidly excluded than from that of the Irish peasant of a poor district. The shipwrecked mariner upon his raft, the convict in his cell, the lingering sufferer on a sick bed, may hope; but he must not.

Daily labour, barely sufficient to produce the commonest necessaries of life, points to no period of rest or repose; year succeeds year in the same dull routine of toil and privation; nor can he look around him and see one who

has risen from that life of misery, to a position of even comparative comfort.

The whole study of his existence, the whole philosophy of his life, is, how to endure; to struggle on under poverty and sickness; in seasons of famine, in times of national calamity, to hoard up the little pittance for his landlord and the payment for his Priest; and he has nothing more to seek for. Were it our object here, it would not be difficult to pursue this theme further, and examine, if much of the imputed slothfulness and indolence of the people was not in reality due to that very hopelessness. How little energy would be left to life, if you took away its ambitions; how few would enter upon the race, if there were no goal before them! Our present aim, however, is rather with the fortunes of those we have so lately left. To these poor men, now, a new existence opened. Not the sun of spring could more suddenly illumine the landscape where winter so late had thrown its shadows, than did prosperity fall brightly on their hearts, endowing life with pleasures and enjoyments, of which they had not dared to dream before.

In preferring this mountain-tract to some rich lowland farm, they were rather guided by that spirit of attachment

to the home of their fathers—so characteristic a trait in the Irish peasant—than by the promptings of self-interest. The mountain was indeed a wild and bleak expanse, scarce affording herbage for a few sheep and goats; the callows at its foot, deeply flooded in winter, and even by the rains of autumn, made tillage precarious and uncertain; yet the fact that these were rent-free, that of its labour and its fruits all was now their own, inspired hope and sweetened toil. They no longer felt the dreary monotony of daily exertion, by which hour was linked to hour, and year to year, in one unbroken succession;—no; they now could look forward, they could lift up their hearts and strain their eyes to a future, where honest industry had laid up its store for the decline of life; they could already fancy the enjoyments of the summer season, when they should look down upon their own crops and herds, or think of the winter nights, and the howling of the storm without, reminding them of the blessings of a home.

How little to the mind teeming with its bright and ambitious aspirings would seem the history of their humble hopes! how insignificant and how narrow might appear

the little plans and plots they laid for that new road in life, in which they were now to travel! The great man might scoff at these, the moralist might frown at their worldliness; but there is nothing sordid or mean in the spirit of manly independence; and they who know the Irish people, will never accuse them of receiving worldly benefits with any forgetfulness of their true and only source. And now to our story.

The little cabin upon the mountain was speedily added to, and fashioned into a comfortable-looking farmhouse of the humbler class. Both father and son would willingly have left it as it was; but the landlord's wish had laid a command upon them, and they felt it would have been a misapplication of his bounty, had they not done as he had desired. So closely, indeed, did they adhere to his injunctions, that a little room was added specially for his use and accommodation, whenever he came on that promised excursion he hinted at. Every detail of this little chamber interested them deeply; and many a night, as they sat over their fire, did they eagerly discuss the habits and tastes of the "quality," anxious to be wanting in nothing which should make it suitable for one like him.

Sufficient money remained above all this expenditure to purchase some sheep, and even a cow; and already their changed fortunes had excited the interest and curiosity of the little world in which they lived.

There is one blessing, and it is a great one, attendant on humble life. The amelioration of condition requires not that a man should leave the friends and companions he has so long sojourned with, and seek, in a new order, others to supply their place; the spirit of class does not descend to him, or rather, he is far above it; his altered state suggests comparatively few enjoyments or comforts in which his old associates cannot participate; and thus the Connors' cabin was each Sunday thronged by the country people, who came to see with their own eyes, and hear with their own ears, the wonderful good fortune that befell them.

Had the landlord been an angel of light, the blessings invoked upon him could not have been more frequent or fervent; each measured the munificence of the act by his own short standard of worldly possessions; and individual murmurings for real or fancied wrongs were hushed in the presence of one such deed of benevolence.

This is no exaggerated picture. Such was peasant-gratitude once; and such, O landlords of Ireland! it might still have been, if you had not deserted the people. The meanest of your favours, the poorest show of your good-feeling, were acts of grace for which nothing was deemed requital. Your presence in the poor man's cabin —your kind word to him upon the highway—your aid in sickness—your counsel in trouble, were ties which bound him more closely to your interest, and made him more surely yours, than all the parchments of your attorney, or all the papers of your agent. He knew you then as something more than the recipient of his earnings. That was a time, when neither the hireling patriot nor the calumnious press could sow discord between you. If it be otherwise now, ask yourselves, are you all blameless? Did you ever hope that affection could be transmitted through your agent, like the proceeds of your property? Did you expect that the attachments of a people were to reach you by the post? Or was it not natural, that, in their desertion by you, they should seek succour elsewhere? that in their difficulties and their trials they should turn to any who might feel or feign compassion for them?

Nor is it wonderful that, amid the benefits thus bestowed, they should imbibe principles and opinions fatally in contrast with interests like yours.

There were few on whom good fortune could have fallen, without exciting more envious and jealous feelings on the part of others, than on the Connors. The rugged independent character of the father—the gay light-hearted nature of the son, had given them few enemies and many friends. The whole neighbourhood flocked about them to offer their good wishes and congratulations on their bettered condition, and with an honesty of purpose and a sincerity that might have shamed a more elevated sphere. The Joyces alone shewed no participation in this sentiment, or rather, that small fraction of them more immediately linked with Phil Joyce. At first, they affected to sneer at the stories of the Connors' good fortune; and when denial became absurd, they half-hinted that it was a new custom in Ireland for men "to fight for money." These mocking speeches were not slow to reach the ears of the old man and his son; and many thought that the next fair-day would bring with it a heavy retribution for the calamities of the last. In this, however, they were

mistaken. Neither Owen nor his father appeared that day; the mustering of their faction was strong and powerful, but they, whose wrongs were the cause of the gathering, never came forward to head them.

This was an indignity not to be passed over in silence; and the murmurs, at first low and subdued, grew louder and louder, until denunciations heavy and deep fell upon the two who "wouldn't come out and right themselves like men." The faction, discomfited and angered, soon broke up; and returning homeward in their several directions, they left the field to the enemy without even a blow. On the succeeding day, when the observances of religion had taken place of the riotous and disorderly proceedings of the fair, it was not customary for the younger men to remain. The frequenters of the place were mostly women; the few of the other sex were either old and feeble men, or such objects of compassion as traded on the pious feelings of the votaries so opportunely evoked. It was with great difficulty the worthy Priest of the parish had succeeded in dividing the secular from the holy customs of the time, and thus allowing the pilgrims, as all were called on that

day, an uninterrupted period for their devotions. He was firm and resolute, however, in his purpose, and spared no pains to effect it: menacing this one—persuading that; suiting the measure of his arguments to the comprehension of each, he either cajoled or coerced, as the circumstance might warrant. His first care was to remove all the temptations to dissipation and excess; and for this purpose, he banished every show and exhibition, and every tent where gambling and drinking went forward;—his next, a more difficult task, was the exclusion of all those doubtful characters, who, in every walk of life, are suggestive of even more vice than they embody in themselves. These, however, abandoned the place, of their own accord, so soon as they discovered how few were the inducements to remain; until at length, by a tacit understanding, it seemed arranged, that the day of penance and mortification should suffer neither molestation nor interruption from those indisposed to partake of its benefits. So rigid was the Priest in exacting compliance in this matter, that he compelled the tents to be struck by daybreak, except by those few, trusted and privileged individuals, whose minister-

ings to human wants were permitted during the day of sanctity.

And thus the whole picture was suddenly changed. The wild and riotous uproar of the fair, the tumult of voices and music, dancing, drinking, and fighting, were gone; and the low monotonous sound of the pilgrims' prayers was heard, as they moved along upon their knees to some holy well or shrine, to offer up a prayer, or return a thanksgiving for blessings bestowed. The scene was a strange and picturesque one; the long lines of kneeling figures, where the rich scarlet cloak of the women predominated, crossed and recrossed each other as they wended their way to the destined altar; their muttered words blending with the louder and more boisterous appeals of the mendicants, — who, stationed at every convenient angle or turning, besieged each devotee with unremitting entreaty, — deep and heartfelt devotion in every face, every lineament and feature impressed with religious zeal and piety; but still, as group met group going and returning, they interchanged their greetings between their prayers, and mingled the worldly salutations with aspirations heavenward, and their "Paters," and "Aves," and

"Credos," were blended with inquiries for the "childer," or questions about the "crops."

"Isn't that Owen Connor, avick, that's going there, towards the Yallow-well?" said an old crone as she ceased to count her beads.

"You're right enough, Biddy; 'tis himself, and no other; it's a turn he took to devotion since he grew rich."

"Ayeh! ayeh! the Lord be good to us! how fond we all be of life, when we've the bit of bacon to the fore!" And with that she resumed her pious avocations with redoubled energy, to make up for lost time.

The old ladies were as sharp-sighted as such functionaries usually are in any sphere of society. It was Owen Connor himself, performing his first pilgrimage. The commands of his landlord had expressly forbidden him to engage in any disturbance at the fair; the only mode of complying with which, he rightly judged, was by absenting himself altogether. How this conduct was construed by others, we have briefly hinted at. As for himself, poor fellow, if a day of mortification could have availed him any thing, he needn't have appeared among

the pilgrims; — a period of such sorrow and suffering he had never undergone before. But in justice it must be confessed, it was devotion of a very questionable character that brought him there that morning. Since the fair-day, Mary Joyce had never deigned to notice him; and though he had been several times at mass, she either affected not to be aware of his presence, or designedly looked in another direction. The few words of greeting she once gave him on every Sunday morning — the smile she bestowed — dwelt the whole week in his heart, and made him long for the return of the time, when, even for a second or two, she would be near, and speak to him. He was not slow in supposing how the circumstances under which he rescued the landlord's son might be used against him by his enemies; and he well knew that she was not surrounded by any others than such. It was, then, with a heavy heart poor Owen witnessed how fatally his improved fortune had dashed hopes far dearer than all worldly advantage. Not only did the new comforts about him become distasteful, but he even accused them to himself as the source of all his present calamity; and half suspected that it was a judgment on him for

receiving a reward in such a cause. To see her—to speak to her if possible—was now his wish, morn and night; to tell her that he cared more for one look, one glance, than for all the favours fortune did or could bestow: this, and to undeceive her as to any knowledge of young Leslie's rudeness to herself, was the sole aim of his thoughts. Stationing himself therefore in an angle of the ruined church, which formed one of the resting-places for prayer, he waited for hours for Mary's coming; and at last, with a heart half sickened with deferred hope, he saw her pale but beautiful features, shaded by the large blue hood of her cloak, as with downcast eyes she followed in the train.

"Give me your place, acushla; God will reward you for it; I'm late at the station," said he, to an old ill-favoured hag that followed next to Mary; and at the same time, to aid his request, slipped half-a-crown into her hand.

The wrinkled face brightened into a kind of wicked intelligence as she muttered in Irish: "'Tis a gould guinea the same place is worth; but I'll give it to you for the sake of yer people;" and at the same time pock-

eting the coin in a canvass pouch, among relics and holy clay, she moved off, to admit him in the line.

Owen's heart beat almost to bursting, as he found himself so close to Mary; and all his former impatience to justify himself, and to speak to her, fled in the happiness he now enjoyed. No devotee ever regarded the relic of a Saint with more trembling ecstacy than did he the folds of that heavy mantle that fell at his knees; he touched it as men would do a sacred thing. The live-long day he followed her, visiting in turn each shrine and holy spot; and ever, as he was ready to speak to her, some fear that, by a word, he might dispel the dream of bliss he revelled in, stopped him, and he was silent.

It was as the evening drew near, and the Pilgrims were turning towards the lake, beside which, at a small thorn-tree, the last "station" of all was performed, that an old beggar, whose importunity suffered none to escape, blocked up the path, and prevented Mary from proceeding until she had given him something. All her money had been long since bestowed; and she said so, hurriedly, and endeavoured to move forward.

"Let Owen Connor, behind you, give it, acushla! He's rich now, and can well afford it," said the cripple.

She turned round at the words; the action was

involuntary, and their eyes met. There are glances which

reveal the whole secret of a lifetime; there are looks which dwell in the heart longer and deeper than words. Their eyes met for merely a few seconds; and while in *her* face offended pride was depicted, poor Owen's sorrow-struck and broken aspect spoke of long suffering and grief so powerfully, that, ere she turned away, her heart had half forgiven him.

"You wrong me hardly, Mary," said he, in a low, broken voice, as the train moved on. "The Lord, he knows my heart this blessed day! *Pater noster, qui es in cœlis!*" added he, louder, as he perceived that his immediate follower had ceased his prayers to listen to him. "He knows that I'd rather live and die the poorest—*Beneficat tuum nomen!*" cried he, louder. And then, turning abruptly, said:

"Av it's plazing to you, sir, don't be trampin' on my heels. I can't mind my devotions, an' one so near me."

"It's not so unconvaynient, maybe, when they're afore you," muttered the old fellow, with a grin of sly malice. And though Owen overheard the taunt, he felt no inclination to notice it.

"Four long years I've loved ye, Mary Joyce; and the sorra more encouragement I ever got nor the smile ye used to give me. And if ye take *that* from me, now—Are ye listening to me, Mary? do ye hear me, asthore?—Bad scran to ye, ye ould varmint! why won't ye keep behind? How is a man to save his sowl, an' you making him blasphame every minit?"

"I was only listenin' to that elegant prayer ye were saying," said the old fellow, drily.

"'Tis betther you'd mind your own, then," said Owen, fiercely; "or, by the blessed day, I'll teach ye a new penance ye never heerd of afore!"

The man dropped back, frightened at the sudden determination these words were uttered in; and Owen resumed his place.

"I may never see ye again, Mary. 'Tis the last time you'll hear me spake to you. I'll lave the ould man. God look to him! I'll lave him now, and go be a sodger. Here we are now, coming to this holy well; and I'll swear an oath before the Queen of Heaven, that before this time to-morrow ——"

"How is one to mind their prayers at all, Owen

Connor, if ye be talking to yourself, so loud?" said Mary, in a whisper, but one which lost not a syllable, as it fell on Owen's heart.

"My own sweet darling, the light of my eyes, ye are!" cried he, as with clasped hands he muttered blessings upon her head; and with such vehemence of gesture, and such unfeigned signs of rapture, as to evoke remarks from some beggars near, highly laudatory of his zeal.

"Look at the fine young man there, prayin' wid all his might. Ayeh, the Saints give ye the benefit of your Pilgrimage!"

"Musha! but ye'r a credit to the station; ye put yer sowl in it, anyhow!" said an old Jezebel, whose hard features seemed to defy emotion.

Owen looked up; and directly in front of him, with his back against a tree, and his arms crossed on his breast, stood Phil Joyce: his brow was dark with passion, and his eyes glared like those of a maniac. A cold thrill ran through Owen's heart, lest the anger thus displayed should fall on Mary; for he well knew with what tyranny the poor girl was treated. He therefore took the moment of the pilgrims' approach to the holy tree, to move from

his place, and, by a slightly circuitous path, came up to where Joyce was standing.

"I've a word for you, Phil Joyce," said he, in a low voice, where every trace of emotion was carefully subdued. "Can I spake it to you here?"

Owen's wan and sickly aspect, if it did not shock, it at least astonished Joyce, for he looked at him for some seconds without speaking; then said, half rudely:

"Ay, here will do as well as any where, since ye didn't like to say it yesterday."

There was no mistaking this taunt; the sneer on Owen's want of courage was too plain to be misconstrued; and although for a moment he looked as if disposed to resent it, he merely shook his head mournfully, and replied: "It is not about that I came to speak; it's about your sister, Mary Joyce."

Phil turned upon him a stare of amazement, as quickly followed by a laugh, whose insulting mockery made Owen's cheek crimson with shame.

"True enough, Phil Joyce; I know your meanin' well," said he, with an immense effort to subdue his passion. "I'm a poor cottier, wid a bit of mountain-land—

sorra more — and has no right to look up to one like her. But listen to me, Phil!" and here he grasped his arm, and spoke with a thick guttural accent: "Listen to me! Av the girl wasn't what she is, but only your sister, I'd scorn her as I do yourself;" and with that, he pushed him from him with a force that made him stagger. Before he had well recovered, Owen was again at his side, and continued: — "And now, one word more, and all's ended between us. For you, and your likings or mislikings, I never cared a rush: but 'tis Mary herself refused me, so there's no more about it; only don't be wreaking your temper on her, for she has no fault in it."

"Av a sister of mine ever bestowed a thought on the likes o' ye, I'd give her the outside of the door this night," said Joyce, whose courage now rose from seeing several of his faction attracted to the spot, by observing that he and Connor were conversing. "'Tis a disgrace — divil a less than a disgrace to spake of it!"

"Well, we won't do so any more, plaze God!" said Owen, with a smile of very fearful meaning. "It will be another little matter we'll have to settle when we meet next. There's a score there, not paid off yet:" and at the

word he lifted his hat, and disclosed the deep mark of the scarce-closed gash on his forehead: "and so, good bye to ye."

A rude nod from Phil Joyce was all the reply, and Owen turned homewards.

If prosperity could suggest the frame of mind to enjoy it, the rich would always be happy; but such is not the dispensation of Providence. Acquisition is but a stage on the road of ambition; it lightens the way, but brings the goal no nearer. Owen never returned to his mountain-home with a sadder heart. He passed without regarding them, the little fields, now green with the coming spring; he bestowed no look nor thought upon the herds that already speckled the mountain-side; disappointment had embittered his spirit; and even love itself now gave way to faction-hate, the old and cherished animosity of party.

If the war of rival factions did not originally spring from the personal quarrels of men of rank and station, who stimulated their followers and adherents to acts of aggression and reprisal, it assuredly was perpetuated, if not with their concurrence, at least permission; and many were not ashamed to avow, that in these savage encoun-

ters the "bad blood" of the country was "let out," at less cost and trouble than by any other means. When legal proceedings were recurred to, the landlord, in his capacity of magistrate, maintained the cause of his tenants; and, however disposed to lean heavily on them himself, in the true spirit of tyranny he opposed pressure from any other hand than his own. The people were grateful for this advocacy — far more, indeed, than they often proved for less questionable kindness. They regarded the law with so much dread — they awaited its decisions with such uncertainty—that he who would conduct them through its mazes was indeed a friend. But, was the administration of justice, some forty or fifty years back in Ireland, such as to excite or justify other sentiments? Was it not this tampering with right and wrong, this recurrence to patronage, that made legal redress seem an act of meanness and cowardice among the people? No cause was decided upon its own merits. The influence of the great man—the interest he was disposed to take in the case—the momentary condition of county politics —with the general character of the individuals at issue, usually determined the matter; and it could scarcely be

expected that a triumph thus obtained should have exercised any peaceful sway among the people.

"He wouldn't be so bould to-day, av his landlord wasn't to the fore," was Owen Connor's oft-repeated reflection, as he ascended the narrow pathway towards his cabin; "'tis the good backing makes us brave, God help us!" From that hour forward, the gay light-hearted peasant became dark, moody, and depressed; the very circumstances which might be supposed calculated to have suggested a happier frame of mind, only increased and embittered his gloom. His prosperity made daily labour no longer a necessity. Industry, it is true, would have brought more comforts about him, and surrounded him with more appliances of enjoyment; but long habits of endurance had made him easily satisfied on this score, and there were no examples for his imitation which should make him strive for better. So far, then, from the landlord's benevolence working for good, its operation was directly the reverse; his leniency had indeed taken away the hardship of a difficult and onerous payment, but the relief suggested no desire for an equivalent amelioration of condition. The first pleasurable emotions of gratitude

over, they soon recurred to the old customs in every thing, and gradually fell back into all the observances of their former state, the only difference being, that less exertion on their parts was now called for than before.

Had the landlord been a resident on his property—acquainting himself daily and hourly with the condition of his tenants—holding up examples for their imitation—rewarding the deserving—discountenancing the unworthy—extending the benefits of education among the young—and fostering habits of order and good conduct among all, Owen would have striven among the first for a place of credit and honour, and speedily have distinguished himself above his equals. But alas! no; Mr. Leslie, when not abroad, lived in England. Of his Irish estates he knew nothing, save through the half-yearly accounts of his agent. He was conscious of excellent intentions; he was a kind, even a benevolent man; and in the society of his set, remarkable for more than ordinary sympathies with the poor. To have ventured on any reflection on a landlord before him, would have been deemed a downright absurdity.

He was a living refutation of all such calumnies; yet

how was it, that, in the district he owned, the misery of the people was a thing to shudder at? that there were hovels excavated in the bogs, within which human beings lingered on between life and death, their existence like some terrible passage in a dream? that beneath these frail roofs famine and fever dwelt, until suffering, and starvation itself, had ceased to prey upon minds on which no ray of hope ever shone? Simply he did not know of these things; he saw them not; he never heard of them. He was aware that seasons of unusual distress occurred, and that a more than ordinary degree of want was experienced by a failure of the potato-crop; but on these occasions, he read his name, with a subscription of a hundred pounds annexed, and was not that a receipt in full for all the claims of conscience? He ran his eyes over a list in which Royal and Princely titles figured, and he expressed himself grateful for so much sympathy with Ireland! But did he ask himself the question, whether, if he had resided among his people, such necessities for alms-giving had ever arisen? Did he inquire how far his own desertion of his tenantry — his ignorance of their state — his indifference to their condition — had fostered

these growing evils? Could he acquit himself of the guilt of deriving all the appliances of his ease and enjoyment, from those whose struggles to supply them were made under the pressure of disease and hunger? Was unconsciousness of all this, an excuse sufficient to stifle remorse? Oh, it is not the monied wealth dispensed by the resident great man; it is not the stream of affluence, flowing in its thousand tiny rills, and fertilising as it goes, we want. It is far more the kindly influence of those virtues which find their congenial soil in easy circumstances; benevolence, sympathy, succour in sickness, friendly counsel in distress, timely aid in trouble, encouragement to the faint-hearted, caution to the over-eager: these are gifts, which, giving, makes the bestower richer; and these are the benefits which, better than gold, foster the charities of life among a people, and bind up the human family in a holy and indissoluble league. No benevolence from afar, no well wishings from distant lands, compensate for the want of them. To neglect such duties is to fail in the great social compact by which the rich and poor are united, and, what some may deem of more moment still, to resign the rightful influence

of property into the hands of dangerous and designing men.

It is in vain to suppose that traditionary deservings will elicit gratitude when the present generation are neglectful. On the contrary, the comparison of the once resident, now absent landlord, excites very different feelings; the murmurings of discontent swell into the louder language of menace; and evils, over which no protective power of human origin could avail, are ascribed to that class, who, forgetful of one great duty, are now accused of causing every calamity. If not present to exercise the duties their position demands, their absence exaggerates every accusation against them; and from the very men, too, who have, by the fact of their desertion, succeeded in obtaining the influence that should be theirs.

Owen felt this desertion sorely. Had Mr. Leslie been at home, he would at once have had recourse to him. Mr. French, the agent, lived on the property—but Mr. French was "a hard man," and never liked the Connors; indeed, he never forgave them for not relinquishing the mountain-farm they held, in exchange for another he offered them, as he was anxious to preserve the mountain

for his own shooting. At the time we speak of, intemperance was an Irish vice, and one which prevailed largely. Whisky entered into every circumstance and relation of life. It cemented friendships and ratified contracts; it celebrated the birth of the newly-born, it consoled the weeping relatives over the grave of the departed; it was a welcome and a bond of kindness, and, as the stirrup-cup, was the last pledge at parting. Men commemorated their prosperity by drink, and none dared to face gloomy fortune without it. Owen Connor had recourse to it, as to a friend that never betrayed. The easy circumstances, in comparison with many others, he enjoyed, left him both means and leisure for such a course; and few days passed without his paying a visit to the "shebeen-house" of the village. If the old man noticed this new habit, his old prejudices were too strong to make him prompt in condemning it. Indeed, he rather regarded it as a natural consequence of their bettered fortune, that Owen should frequent these places; and as he never returned actually drunk, and always brought back with him the current rumours of the day, as gathered from newspapers and passing gossip, his father relied on such

scraps of information for his evening's amusement over the fire.

It was somewhat later than usual that Owen was returning home one night, and the old man, anxious and uneasy at his absence, had wandered part of the way to meet him, when he saw him coming slowly forward, with that heavy weariness of step, deep grief and pre-occupation inspire. When the young man had come within speaking distance of his father, he halted suddenly, and looking up at him, exclaimed, "There's sorrowful news for ye to-night, father!"

"I knew it! I knew it well!" said the old man, as he clasped his hands before him, and seemed preparing himself to bear the shock with courage. "I had a dhrame of it last night; and 'tis death, wherever it is."

"You're right there. The master's dead!"

Not another word was spoken by either, as side by side they slowly ascended the mountain-path. It was only when seated at the fire-side, that Owen regained sufficient collectedness to detail the particulars he had learned in the village. Mr. Leslie had died of the cholera at Paris. The malady had just broken out in that city,

and he was among its earliest victims. The terrors which that dreadful pestilence inspired, reached every remote part of Europe, and at last, with all the aggravated horrors of its devastating career, swept across Ireland. The same letter which brought the tidings of Mr. Leslie's death, was the first intelligence of the plague. A scourge so awful needed not the fears of the ignorant to exaggerate its terrors; yet men seemed to vie with each other in their dreadful conjectures regarding it.

All the sad interest the landlord's sudden death would have occasioned under other circumstances was merged in the fearful malady of which he died. Men heard with almost apathy of the events that were announced as likely to succeed, in the management of the property; and only listened with eagerness if the pestilence were mentioned. Already its arrival in England was declared; and the last lingering hope of the devotee was, that the holy island of St. Patrick might escape its ravages. Few cared to hear what a few weeks back had been welcome news—that the old agent was to be dismissed, and a new one appointed. The speculations which once would have been rife enough, were now silent. There was but one

terrible topic in every heart and on every tongue—the Cholera.

The inhabitants of great cities, with wide sources of information available, and free conversation with each other, can scarcely estimate the additional degree of terror the prospect of a dreadful epidemic inspires among the dwellers in unfrequented rural districts. The cloud, not bigger than a man's hand at first, gradually expands itself, until the whole surface of earth is darkened by its shadow. The business of life stands still; the care for the morrow is lost; the proneness to indulge in the gloomiest anticipations common calamity invariably suggests, heightens the real evil, and disease finds its victims more than doomed at its first approach. In this state of agonising suspense, when rumours arose to be contradicted, reasserted, and again disproved, came the tidings that the Cholera was in Dublin. The same week it had broken out in many other places; at last the report went, that a poor man, who had gone into the market of Galway to sell his turf, was found dead on the steps of the chapel. Then, followed the whole array of precautionary measures, and advices, and boards of health. Then, it was announced that the plague was

raging fearfully—the hospitals crowded—death in every street.

Terrible and appalling as these tidings were, the fearful fact never realised itself in the little district we speak of, until a death occurred in the town close by. He was a shopkeeper in Oughterarde, and known to the whole neighbourhood. This solitary instance brought with it more of dreadful meaning than all the shock of distant calamity. The heart-rending wail of those who listened to the news smote many more with the cold tremour of coming death. Another case soon followed, a third, and a fourth succeeded, all fatal; and the disease was among them.

It is only when a malady, generally fatal, is associated with the terrors of contagion, that the measure of horror and dread flows over. When the sympathy which suffering sickness calls for is yielded in a spirit of almost despair, and the ministerings to the dying are but the prelude to the same state, then indeed death is armed with all his terrors. No people are more remarkable for the charities of the sick-bed than the poor Irish. It is with them less a sentiment than a religious instinct; and though they watched the course of the pestilence, and saw

few, if any, escape death who took it, their devotion never failed them. They practised, with such skill as they possessed, every remedy in turn. They, who trembled but an hour before at the word when spoken, faced the danger itself with a bold heart; and, while the insidious signs of the disease were already upon them—while their wearied limbs and clammy hands bespoke that their own hour was come, they did not desist from their good offices, until past the power to render them.

It was spring-time, the season more than usually mild, the prospects of the year were already favourable, and all the signs of abundance rife in the land. What a contrast the scene without to that presented by the interior of each dwelling! There, death and dismay were met with at every step. The old man and the infant prostrated by the same stroke; the strong and vigorous youth who went forth to labour in the morning—at noon, a feeble, broken-spirited creature—at sunset, a corpse.

As the minds and temperaments of men were fashioned, so did fear operate upon them. Some, it made reckless and desperate, careless of what should happen, and indifferent to every measure of precaution; some, became

paralysed with fear, and seemed unable to make an effort for safety, were it even attainable; others, exaggerating every care and caution, lived a life of unceasing terror and anxiety; while a few—they were unfortunately a very few—summoned courage to meet the danger in a spirit of calm and resolute determination; while in their reformed habits it might be seen how thoroughly they felt that their own hour might be a brief one. Among these was Owen Connor. From the day the malady appeared in the neighbourhood, he never entered the public-house of the village, but, devoting himself to the work of kindness the emergency called for, went from cabin to cabin rendering every service in his power. The poorest depended on him for the supply of such little comforts as they possessed, for at every market-day he sold a sheep or a lamb to provide them; the better-off looked to him for advice and counsel, following his directions as implicitly as though he were a physician of great skill. All recognised his devotedness in their cause, and his very name was a talisman for courage in every humble cabin around. His little ass-cart, the only wheeled vehicle that ever ascended the mountain where he lived, was seen each

morning moving from door to door, while Owen brought either some small purchase he was commissioned to make at Oughterarde, or left with the more humble some offering of his own benevolence.

"There's the salt ye bid me buy, Mary Cooney; and here's fourpence out of it,—do ye all be well, still?"

"We are, and thank ye, Owen."

"The Lord keep ye so! How's Ned Daly?"

"He's off, Owen dear; his brother James is making the coffin; poor boy, he looks very weak himself this morning."

The cart moved on, and at length stopped at a small hovel built against the side of a clay ditch. It was a mere assemblage of wet sods with the grass still growing, and covered by some branches of trees and loose straw over them. Owen halted the ass at the opening of the miserable den, through which the smoke now issued, and at the same moment a man, stooping double to permit him to pass out into the open air, came forward: he was apparently about fifty years of age—his real age was not thirty; originally a well-formed and stout-built fellow, starvation and want had made him a mere skeleton. His

clothes were, a ragged coat, which he wore next his skin, for shirt he had none, and a pair of worn corduroy trousers; he had neither hat, shoes, nor stockings; but still, all these signs of destitution were nothing in comparison with the misery displayed in his countenance. Except that his lip trembled with a convulsive shiver, not a feature moved—the cheeks were livid and flattened—the dull grey eyes had lost all the light of intelligence, and stared vacantly before him.

"Well, Martin, how is she?"

"I don't know, Owen dear," said he, in a faltering voice; "maybe 'tis sleeping she is."

Owen followed him within the hut, and stooping down to the fire, lighted a piece of bogwood to enable him to see. On the ground, covered only by a ragged frieze coat, lay a young woman quite dead: her arm, emaciated and livid, was wrapped round a little child of about three years old, still sleeping on the cold bosom of its mother.

"You must take little Patsy away," said Owen in a whisper, as he lifted the boy in his arms; "*she's* happy now."

The young man fell upon his knees and kissed the

The Cholera Hut.

London Chapman & Hall 186 Strand

corpse, but spoke not a word; grief had stupified his senses, and he was like one but half awake. "Come with me, Martin; come with me, and I'll settle every thing for you." He obeyed mechanically, and before quitting the cabin, placed some turf upon the fire, as he was wont to do. The action was a simple one, but it brought the tears into Owen's eyes. "I'll take care of Patsy for you till you want him. He's fond of me of ould, and won't be lonesome with me;" and Owen wrapped the child in his greatcoat, and moved forwards.

When they had advanced a few paces, Martin stopped suddenly and muttered, "She has nothing to drink!" and then, as if remembering vaguely what had happened, added, "It's a long sleep, Ellen dear!"

Owen gave the directions for the funeral, and leaving poor Martin in the house of one of the cottiers near, where he sat down beside the hearth, and never uttered a word; he went on his way, with little Patsy still asleep within his arms.

"Where are you going, Peggy?" asked Owen, as an old lame woman moved past as rapidly as her infirmity would permit: "you're in a hurry this morning."

"So I am, Owen Connor—these is the busy times wid me—I streaked five to-day, early as it is, and I'm going now over to Phil Joyce's. What's the matter wid yourself, Owen? sit down, avich, and taste this."

"What's wrong at Phil's?" asked Owen, with a choking fulness in his throat.

"It's the little brother he has; Billy's got it, they say."

"Is Mary Joyce well—did ye hear?"

"Errah! she's well enough now, but she may be low before night," muttered the crone; while she added, with a fiendish laugh, "her purty faytures won't save her now, no more nor the rest of us."

"There's a bottle of port wine, Peggy; take it with ye, dear. 'Tis the finest thing at all, I'm tould, for keeping it off—get Mary to take a glass of it; but mind now, for the love o' ye, never say it was me gav it. There's bad blood between the Joyces and me, ye understand."

"Ay, ay, I know well enough," said the hag, clutching the bottle eagerly, while opening a gate on the roadside, she hobbled on her way towards Phil Joyce's cabin.

It was near evening as Owen was enabled to turn

homewards; for besides having a great many places to visit, he was obliged to stop twice to get poor Patsy something to eat, the little fellow being almost in a state of starvation. At length he faced towards the mountain, and with a sad heart and weary step plodded along.

"Is poor Ellen buried?" said he, as he passed the carpenter's door, where the coffin had been ordered.

"She's just laid in the mould—awhile ago."

"I hope Martin bears up better;—did you see him lately?"

"This is for him," said the carpenter, striking a board with his hammer; "he's at peace now."

"Martin! sure he's not dead?—Martin Neale, I mean."

"So do I too; he had it on him since morning, they say; but he just slipped away without a word or a moan."

"O God, be good to us, but the times is dreadful!" ejaculated Owen.

"Some says it's the ind of the world's comin'," said an old man, that sat moving his stick listlessly among the shavings; "and 'twould be well for most of us it was too."

"Thrue for you, Billy; there's no help for the poor."

No sentiment could meet more general acceptance than this — none less likely to provoke denial. Thrown upon each other for acts of kindness and benevolence, they felt from how narrow a store each contributed to another's wants, and knew well all the privations that charity like this necessitated, at the same time that they felt themselves deserted by those whose generosity might have been exercised without sacrificing a single enjoyment, or interfering with the pursuit of any accustomed pleasure.

There is no more common theme than the ingratitude of the poor — their selfishness and hard-heartedness; and unquestionably a life of poverty is but an indifferent teacher of fine feelings or gentle emotions. The dreary monotony of their daily lives, the unvarying sameness of the life-long struggle between labour and want, are little suggestive of any other spirit than a dark and brooding melancholy: and it were well, besides, to ask, if they who call themselves benefactors have been really generous, and not merely just? We speak more particularly of the relations which exist between the owner of the land and those who till it; and where benevolence is a duty, and not a virtue depending on the will: not that they, in

whose behalf it is ever exercised, regard it in this light—very far from it! Their thankfulness for benefits is generally most disproportioned to their extent; but we are dissatisfied because our charity has not changed the whole current of their fortunes, and that the favours which cost us so little to bestow, should not become the ruling principle of their lives.

Owen reflected deeply on these things as he ascended the mountain-road. The orphan child he carried in his arms pressed such thoughts upon him, and he wondered why rich men denied themselves the pleasures of benevolence. He did not know that many great men enjoyed the happiness, but that it was made conformable to their high estate by institutions and establishments; by boards, and committees, and guardians; by all the pomp and circumstance of stuccoed buildings and liveried attendants. That to save themselves the burden of memory, their good deeds were chronicled in lists of "founders" and "life-subscribers," and their names set forth in newspapers; while, to protect their finer natures from the rude assaults of actual misery, they deputed others to be the stewards of their bounty.

Owen did not know all this, or he had doubtless been less unjust regarding such persons. He never so much as heard of the pains that are taken to ward off the very sight of poverty, and all the appliances employed to exclude suffering from the gaze of the wealthy. All his little experience told him was, how much of good might be done within the sphere around him by one possessed of affluence. There was not a cabin around, where he could not point to some object claiming aid or assistance. Even in seasons of comparative comfort and abundance, what a deal of misery still existed; and what a blessing it would bring on him who sought it out, to compassionate and relieve it! So Owen thought, and so he felt too; not the less strongly that another heart then beat against his own, the little pulses sending a gush of wild delight through his bosom as he revelled in the ecstacy of benevolence. The child awoke, and looked wildly about him; but when he recognised in whose arms he was, he smiled happily, and cried, "Nony, Nony," the name by which Owen was known among all the children of the village and its neighbourhood.

"Yes, Patsy," said Owen, kissing him, "your own

Nony! you're coming home with him to see what a nice house he has upon the mountain for you, and the purty lake near it, and the fish swimming in it."

The little fellow clapped his hands with glee, and seemed delighted at all he heard.

"Poor darlin'," muttered Owen, sorrowfully; "he doesn't know 'tis the sad day for him;" and as he spoke,

the wind from the valley bore on it the mournful cadence of a death-cry, as a funeral moved along the road. "His father's berrin'!" added he. "God help us! how fast misfortune does be overtaking us at the time our heart's happiest! It will be many a day before he knows all this morning cost him."

The little child meanwhile caught the sounds, and starting up in Owen's arms, he strained his eyes to watch the funeral procession as it slowly passed on. Owen held him up for a few seconds to see it, and wiped the large tears that started to his own eyes. "Maybe Martin and poor Ellen's looking down on us now!" and with that he laid the little boy back in his arms and plodded forward.

It was but seldom that Owen Connor ascended that steep way without halting to look down on the wide valley, and the lake, and the distant mountains beyond it. The scene was one of which he never wearied; indeed, its familiarity had charms for him greater and higher than mere picturesque beauty can bestow. Each humble cabin with its little family was known to him; he was well read in the story of their lives; he had mingled in all their

hopes and fears from childhood to old age; and, as the lights trembled through the dark night and spangled the broad expanse, he could bring before his mind's eye the humble hearths round which they sat, and think he almost heard their voices. Now, he heeded not these things, but steadily bent his steps towards home.

At last, the twinkle of a star-like light shewed that he was near his journey's end. It shone from the deep shadow of a little glen, in which his cabin stood. The seclusion of the spot was in Owen's eyes its greatest charm. Like all men who have lived much alone, he set no common store by the pleasures of solitude, and fancied that most if not all of his happiness was derived from this source. At this moment his gratitude was more than usual, as he muttered to himself, "Thank God for it! we've a snug little place away from the sickness, and no house near us at all;" and with this comforting reflection he drew near the cabin. The door, contrary to custom at nightfall, lay open; and Owen, painfully alive to any suspicious sign, from the state of anxiety his mind had suffered, entered hastily.

"Father! where are you?" said he quickly, not seeing

the old man in his accustomed place beside the fire; but there was no answer. Laying the child down, Owen passed into the little chamber which served as the old man's bedroom, and where now he lay stretched upon the bed in his clothes. "Are ye sick, father? What ails ye, father dear?" asked the young man, as he took his hand in his own.

"I'm glad ye've come at last, Owen," replied his father feebly. "I've got the sickness, and am going fast."

"No — no, father! don't be down-hearted!" cried Owen, with a desperate effort to suggest the courage he did not feel; for the touch of the cold wet hand had already told him the sad secret. "'Tis a turn ye have."

"Well, maybe so," said he, with a sigh; "but there's a cowld feeling about my heart I never knew afore. Get me a warm drink, anyway."

While Owen prepared some cordial from the little store he usually dispensed among the people, his father told him, that a boy from a sick house had called at the cabin that morning to seek for Owen, and from him, in all likelihood, he must have caught the malady. "I remember," said the old man, "that he was quite

dark in the skin, and was weak in his limbs as he walked."

"Ayeh!" muttered Owen, "av it was the 'disease' he had, sorra bit of this mountain he'd ever get up. The strongest men can't lift a cup of wather to their lips, when it's on them; but there's a great scarcity in the glen, and maybe the boy eat nothing before he set out."

Although Owen's explanation was the correct one, it did not satisfy the old man's mind, who, besides feeling convinced of his having the malady, could not credit his taking it by other means than contagion. Owen never quitted his side, and multiplied cares and attentions of every kind; but it was plain the disease was gaining ground, for ere midnight the old man's strength was greatly gone, and his voice sunk to a mere whisper. Yet the malady was characterised by none of the symptoms of the prevailing epidemic, save slight cramps, of which from time to time he complained. His case seemed one of utter exhaustion. His mind was clear and calm; and although unable to speak, except in short and broken sentences, no trait of wandering intellect appeared. His malady was a common one among those whose fears,

greatly excited by the disease, usually induced symptoms of prostration and debility, as great, if not as rapid, as those of actual cholera. Meanwhile his thoughts were alternately turning from his own condition to that of the people in the glen, for whom he felt the deepest compassion. "God help them!" was his constant expression. "Sickness is the sore thing; but starvation makes it dreadful. And so Luke Clancy's dead! Poor ould Luke! he was seventy-one in Michaelmas. And Martin, too! he was a fine man."

The old man slept, or seemed to sleep, for some hours, and on waking it was clear daylight. "Owen, dear! I wish," said he, "I could see the Priest; but you mustn't lave me: I couldn't bear that now."

Poor Owen's thoughts were that moment occupied on the same subject, and he was torturing himself to think of any means of obtaining Father John's assistance, without being obliged to go for him himself.

"I'll go, and be back here in an hour—ay, or less," said he, eagerly; for terrible as death was to him, the thought of seeing his father die unanointed, was still more so.

"In an hour—where'll I be in an hour, Owen dear? the blessed Virgin knows well, it wasn't my fault—I'd have the Priest av I could—and sure, Owen, you'll not begrudge me masses, when I'm gone. What's that? It's like a child crying out there."

"'Tis poor Martin's little boy I took home with me—he's lost father and mother this day;" and so saying, Owen hastened to see what ailed the child. "Yer sarvent, sir," said Owen, as he perceived a stout-built, coarse-looking man, with a bull-terrier at his heels, standing in the middle of the floor; "Yer sarvent, sir. Who do ye want here?"

"Are you Owen Connor?" said the man, gruffly.

"That same," replied Owen, as sturdily.

"Then this is notice for you to come up to Mr. Lucas's office in Galway before the twenty-fifth, with your rent, or the receipt for it, which ever you like best."

"And who is Mr. Lucas when he's at home?" said Owen, half-sneeringly.

"You'll know him when you see him," rejoined the other, turning to leave the cabin, as he threw a printed paper on the dresser; and then, as if thinking he had not

been formal enough in his mission, added, "Mr. Lucas is agent to your landlord, Mr. Leslie; and I'll give you a bit of advice, keep a civil tongue in your head with him, and it will do you no harm."

This counsel, delivered much more in a tone of menace than of friendly advice, concluded the interview, for having spoken, the fellow left the cabin, and began to descend the mountain.

Owen's heart swelled fiercely—a flood of conflicting emotions were warring within it; and as he turned to throw the paper into the fire, his eye caught the date, 16th March. "St. Patrick's Eve, the very day I saved his life," said he, bitterly. "Sure I knew well enough how it would be when the landlord died! Well, well, if my poor ould father doesn't know it, it's no matter.—Well, Patsy, acushla, what are ye crying for? There, my boy, don't be afeard, 'tis Nony's with ye."

The accents so kindly uttered quieted the little fellow in a moment, and in a few minutes after he was again asleep in the old straw chair beside the fire. Brief as Owen's absence had been, the old man seemed much worse as he entered the room. "God forgive me, Owen darling,"

said he, "but it wasn't my poor sowl I was thinking of that minit. I was thinking that you must get a letter wrote to the young landlord about this little place—I'm sure he'll never say a word about rent, no more nor his father; and as the times wasn't good lately ——"

"There, there, father," interrupted Owen, who felt shocked at the old man's not turning his thoughts in another direction; "never mind those things," said he; "who knows which of us will be left? the sickness doesn't spare the young, no more than the ould."

"Nor the rich, no more nor the poor," chimed in the old man, with a kind of bitter satisfaction, as he thought on the landlord's death; for of such incongruous motives is man made up, that calamities come lighter when they involve the fall of those in station above our own. "'Tis a fine day, seemingly," said he, suddenly changing the current of his thoughts; "and elegant weather for the country; we'll have to turn in the sheep over that wheat; it will be too rank: ayeh," cried he, with a deep sigh, "I'll not be here to see it;" and for once, the emotions, no dread of futurity could awaken, were realised by worldly considerations, and the old man wept like a child.

"What time of the month is it?" asked he, after a long interval in which neither spoke; for Owen was not really sorry that even thus painfully the old man's thoughts should be turned towards eternity.

"'Tis the seventeenth, father, a holy-day all over Ireland!"

"Is there many at the 'station?'—look out at the door and see."

Owen ascended a little rising ground in front of the cabin, from which the whole valley was visible; but except a group that followed a funeral upon the road, he could see no human thing around. The green where the "stations" were celebrated was totally deserted. There were neither tents nor people; the panic of the plague had driven all ideas of revelry from the minds of the most reckless; and, even to observe the duties of religion, men feared to assemble in numbers. So long as the misfortune was at a distance, they could mingle their prayers in common, and entreat for mercy; but when death knocked at every door, the terror became almost despair.

"Is the 'stations' going on?" asked the old man

eagerly, as Owen re-entered the room. "Is the people at the holy well?"

"I don't see many stirring at all, to-day," was the cautious answer; for Owen scrupled to inflict any avoidable pain upon his mind.

"Lift me up, then!" cried he suddenly, and with a voice stronger, from a violent effort of his will. "Lift me up to the window, till I see the blessed cross; and maybe I'd get a prayer among them. Come, be quick, Owen!"

Owen hastened to comply with his request; but already the old man's eyes were glazed and filmy. The effort had but hastened the moment of his doom; and, with a low faint sigh, he lay back, and died.

To the Irish peasantry, who, more than any other people of Europe, are accustomed to bestow care and attention on the funerals of their friends and relatives, the Cholera, in its necessity for speedy interment, was increased in terrors tenfold. The honours which they were wont to lavish on the dead—the ceremonial of the wake—the mingled merriment and sorrow—the profusion with which they spent the hoarded gains of hard-working labour—and lastly, the long train to the churchyard, evi-

dencing the respect entertained for the departed, should all be foregone; for had not prudence forbid their assembling in numbers, and thus incurring the chances of contagion, which, whether real or not, they firmly believed in, the work of death was too widely disseminated to make such gatherings possible. Each had some one to lament within the limits of his own family, and private sorrow left little room for public sympathy. No longer then was the road filled by people on horseback and foot, as the funeral procession moved forth. The death-wail sounded no more. To chant the *requiem* of the departed, a few—a very few—immediate friends followed the body to the grave, in silence unbroken. Sad hearts, indeed, they brought, and broken spirits; for in this season of pestilence few dared to hope.

By noon, Owen was seen descending the mountain to the village, to make the last preparations for the old man's funeral. He carried little Patsy in his arms; for he could not leave the poor child alone, and in the house of death. The claims of infancy would seem never stronger than in the heart sorrowing over death. The grief that carries the sufferer in his mind's eye over the limits of

this world, is arrested by the tender ties which bind him to life in the young. There is besides a hopefulness in early life — it is, perhaps, its chief characteristic — that combats sorrow, better than all the caresses of friendship, and all the consolations of age. Owen felt this now — he never knew it before. But yesterday, and his father's death had left him without one in the world on whom to fix a hope; and already, from his misery, there arose that one gleam, that now twinkled like a star in the sky of midnight. The little child he had taken for his own was a world to him; and as he went, he prayed fervently that poor Patsy might be spared to him through this terrible pestilence.

When Owen reached the carpenter's, there were several people there; some, standing moodily brooding over recent bereavements; others, spoke in low whispers, as if fearful of disturbing the silence; but all were sorrow-struck and sad.

"How is the ould man, Owen?" said one of a group, as he came forward.

"He's better off than us, I trust in God!" said Owen, with a quivering lip. "He went to rest this morning."

A muttered prayer from all around shewed how general was the feeling of kindness entertained towards the Connors.

"When did he take it, Owen?"

"I don't know that he tuk it at all; but when I came home last night he was lying on the bed, weak and powerless, and he slept away, with scarce a pain, till daybreak; then"——

"He's in glory now, I pray God!" muttered an old man with a white beard. "We were born in the same year, and I knew him since I was a child, like that in your arms; and a good man he was."

"Whose is the child, Owen?" said another in the crowd.

"Martin Neale's," whispered Owen; for he feared that the little fellow might catch the words. "What's the matter with Miles? he looks very low this morning."

This question referred to a large powerful-looking man, who, with a smith's apron twisted round his waist, sat without speaking in a corner of the shop.

"I'm afeard he's in a bad way," whispered the man to whom he spoke. "There was a process-server, or a

bailiff, or something of the kind, serving notices through the townland yesterday, and he lost a shoe off his baste, and would have Miles out, to put it on, tho' we all tould him that he buried his daughter — a fine grown girl — that mornin'. And what does the fellow do, but goes and knocks at the forge till Miles comes out. You know Miles Regan, so I needn't say there wasn't many words passed between them. In less nor two minutes—whatever the bailiff said—Miles tuck him by the throat, and pulled him down from the horse, and dragged him along to the lake, and flung him in. 'Twas the Lord's marcy he knew how to swim; but we don't know what'll be done to Miles yet, for he was the new agent's man."

"Was he a big fellow, with a bull-dog following him?" asked Owen.

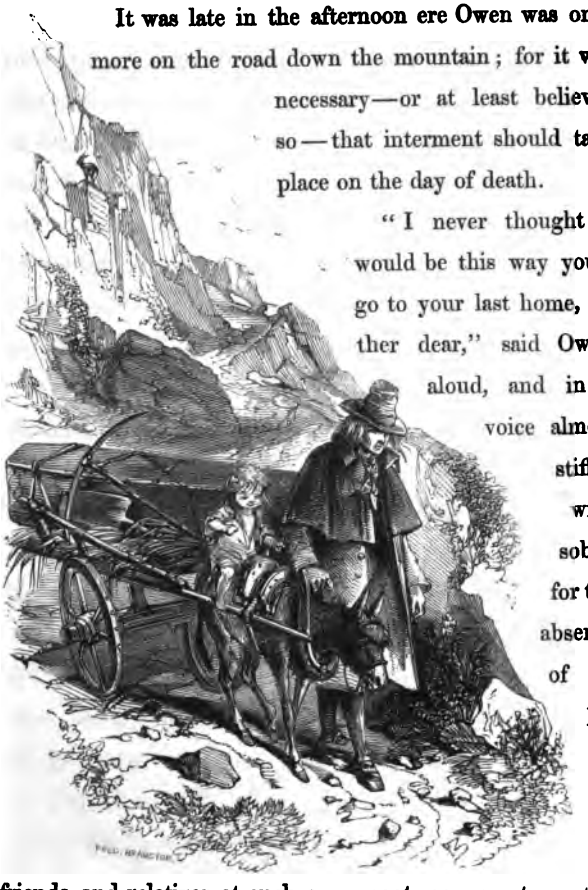
"No; that's another; sure there's three or four of them goin' about. We hear, that bad as ould French was, the new one is worse."

"Well — well, it's the will of God!" said Owen, in that tone of voice which bespoke a willingness for all endurance, so long as the consolation remained, that the ill was not unrecorded above; while he felt that all the

evils of poverty were little in comparison with the loss of those nearest and dearest. "Come, Patsy, my boy!" said he at last, as he placed the coffin in the ass-cart, and turned towards the mountain; and, leading the little fellow by the hand, he set out on his way—"Come home."

It was not until he arrived at that part of the road from which the cabin was visible, that Owen knew the whole extent of his bereavement; then, when he looked up and saw the door hasped on the outside, and the chimney from which no smoke ascended, the full measure of his lone condition came at once before him, and he bent over the coffin and wept bitterly. All the old man's affection for him, his kind indulgence and forbearance, his happy nature, his simple-heartedness, gushed forth from his memory, and he wondered why he had not loved his father, in life, a thousand times more, so deeply was he now penetrated by his loss. If this theme did not assuage his sorrows, it at least so moulded his heart as to bear them in a better spirit; and when, having placed the body in the coffin, he knelt down beside it to pray, it was in a calmer and more submissive frame of mind than he had yet known.

It was late in the afternoon ere Owen was once more on the road down the mountain; for it was necessary—or at least believed so—that interment should take place on the day of death.



"I never thought it would be this way you'd go to your last home, father dear," said Owen aloud, and in a voice almost stifled with sobs; for the absence of all his friends and relatives at such a moment, now smote on the

poor fellow's heart, as he walked beside the little cart on which the coffin was laid. It was indeed a sight to move a sterner nature than his: the coffin, not reverently carried by bearers, and followed by its long train of mourners, but laid slant-wise in the cart, the spade and shovel to dig the grave beside it, and Patsy seated on the back of the ass, watching with infant glee the motion of the animal, as with careful foot he descended the rugged mountain. Poor child! how your guileless laughter shook that strong man's heart with agony!

It was a long and weary way to the old churchyard. The narrow road, too, was deeply rutted and worn by wheel-tracks; for, alas, it had been trodden by many, of late. The grey daylight was fast fading as Owen pushed wide the old gate and entered. What a change to his eyes did the aspect of the place present! The green mounds of earth which marked the resting-place of village patriarchs, were gone; and heaps of fresh-turned clay were seen on every side, no longer decorated, as of old, with little emblems of affectionate sorrow; no tree, nor stone, not even a wild flower, spoke of the regrets of those who remained. The graves were rudely

fashioned, as if in haste — for so it was — few dared to linger there!

Seeking out a lone spot near the ruins, Owen began to dig the grave, while the little child, in mute astonishment at all he saw, looked on.

"Why wouldn't you stay out in the road, Patsy, and play there, till I come to you? This is a cowld damp place for you, my boy."

"Nony! Nony!" cried the child, looking at him with an affectionate smile, as though to say he'd rather be near him.

"Well, well, who knows but you're right? if it's the will of God to take me, maybe you might as well go too. It's a sore thing to be alone in the world, like me now!" And as he muttered the last few words he ceased digging, and rested his head on the cross of the spade.

"Was that you, Patsy? I heard a voice somewhere."

The child shook his head in token of dissent.

"Ayeh! it was only the wind through the ould walls; but sure it might be nat'ral enough for sighs and sobs

to be here: there's many a one has floated over this damp clay."

He resumed his work once more. The night was falling fast as Owen stepped from the deep grave, and knelt down to say a prayer ere he committed the body to the earth.

"Kneel down, darlin', here by my side," said he, placing his arm round the little fellow's waist; "'tis the likes of you God loves best;" and joining the tiny hands with his own, he uttered a deep and fervent prayer for the soul of the departed. "There, father!" said he, as he arose at last, and in a voice as if addressing a living person at his side; "there, father: the Lord, he knows my heart inside me; and if walking the world barefoot would give ye peace or ease, I'd do it, for you were a kind man and a good father to me." He kissed the coffin as he spoke, and stood silently gazing on it.

Arousing himself with a kind of struggle, he untied the cords, and lifted the coffin from the cart. For some seconds he busied himself in arranging the ropes beneath it, and then ceased suddenly, on remembering that he could not lower it into the grave unassisted.

"I'll have to go down the road for some one," muttered he to himself; but as he said this, he perceived at some distance off in the churchyard the figure of a man, as if kneeling over a grave. "The Lord help him, he has his grief too!" ejaculated Owen, as he moved towards him. On coming nearer he perceived that the grave was newly made, and from its size evidently that of a child.

"I ax your pardon," said Owen, in a timid voice, after waiting for several minutes in the vain expectation that the man would look up; "I ax your pardon for disturbing you, but maybe you'll be kind enough to help me to lay this coffin in the ground. I have nobody with me but a child."

The man started and looked round. Their eyes met; it was Phil Joyce and Owen who now confronted each other. But how unlike were both to what they were at their last parting! Then, vindictive passion, outraged pride, and vengeance, swelled every feature and tingled in every fibre of their frames. Now, each stood pale, care-worn, and dispirited, wearied out by sorrow, and almost broken-hearted. Owen was the first to speak.

"I axed your pardon before I saw you, Phil Joyce,

and I ax it again now, for disturbing you; but I didn't know you, and I wanted to put my poor father's body in the grave."

"I didn't know he was dead," said Phil, in a hollow voice, like one speaking to himself. "This is poor little Billy here," and he pointed to the mound at his feet.

"The heavens be his bed this night!" said Owen, piously; "Good night!" and he turned to go away; then stopping suddenly, he added, "Maybe, after all, you'll not refuse me, and the Lord might be more merciful to us both, than if we were to part like enemies."

"Owen Connor, I ask your forgiveness," said Phil, stretching forth his hand, while his voice trembled like a sick child's. "I didn't think the day would come I'd ever do it; but my heart is humble enough now, and maybe 'twill be lower soon. Will you take my hand?"

"Will I, Phil? will I, is it? ay, and however ye may change to me after this night, I'll never forget this." And he grasped the cold fingers in both hands, and pressed them ardently, and the two men fell into each other's arms and wept.

Is it a proud or a humiliating confession for humanity

—assuredly it is a true one—that the finest and best traits of our nature are élicited in our troubles, and not in our joys? that we come out purer through trials than prosperity? Does the chastisement of Heaven teach us better than the blessings lavished upon us? or are these gifts the compensation sent us for our afflictions, that when poorest before man we should be richest before God? Few hearts there are which sorrow makes not wiser—none which are not better for it. So it was here. These men, in the continuance of good fortune, had been enemies for life; mutual hatred had grown up between them, so that each yearned for vengeance on the other; and now they walked like brothers, only seeking forgiveness of each other, and asking pardon for the past.

The old man was laid in his grave, and they turned to leave the churchyard.

"Won't ye come home with me, Owen?" said Phil, as they came to where their roads separated; "won't ye come and eat your supper with us?"

Owen's throat filled up: he could only mutter, "Not to-night, Phil—another time, plaze God." He had not ventured even to ask for Mary, nor did he know whether

Phil Joyce in his reconciliation might wish a renewal of any intimacy with his sister. Such was the reason of Owen's refusal; for, however strange it may seem to some, there is a delicacy of the heart as well as of good breeding, and one advantage it possesses—it is of all lands, and the fashion never changes.

Poor Owen would have shed his best blood to be able to ask after Mary—to learn how she was, and how she bore up under the disasters of the time; but he never mentioned her name: and as for Phil Joyce, his gloomy thoughts had left no room for others, and he parted from Owen without a single allusion to her. "Good night, Owen," said he, "and don't forget your promise to come and see us soon."

"Good night, Phil," was the answer; "and I pray a blessing on you and yours." A slight quivering of the voice at the last word was all he suffered to escape him; and they parted.

FROM that day, the pestilence began to abate in violence. The cases of disease became fewer and less fatal; and at last, like a spent bolt, the malady ceased to work its mischief. Men were slow enough to recognise this bettered aspect of their fortune. Calamity had weighed too heavily on them to make them rally at once. They still walked like those who felt the shadow of death upon them, and

were fearful lest any imprudent act or word might bring back the plague among them.

With time, however, these features passed off: people gradually resumed their wonted habits; and, except where the work of death had been more than ordinarily destructive, the malady was now treated as "a thing that had been."

If Owen Connor had not escaped the common misfortune of the land, he could at least date one happy event from that sad period—his reconciliation with Phil Joyce. This was no passing friendship. The dreadful scenes he had witnessed about him had made Phil an altered character. The devotion of Owen—his manly indifference to personal risk whenever his services were wanted by another—his unsparing benevolence,—all these traits, the mention of which at first only irritated and vexed his soul, were now remembered in the day of reconciliation; and none felt prouder to acknowledge his friendship than his former enemy.

Notwithstanding all this, Owen did not dare to found a hope upon his change of fortune; for Mary was even more distant and cold to him than ever, as though to shew

that, whatever expectations he might conceive from her brother's friendship, he should not reckon too confidently on her feelings. Owen knew not how far he had himself to blame for this; he was not aware that his own constrained manner, his over-acted reserve, had offended Mary to the quick; and thus, both mutually retreated in misconception and distrust. The game of love is the same, whether the players be clad in velvet or in hodden grey. Beneath the gilded ceilings of a palace, or the lowly rafters of a cabin, there are the same hopes and fears, the same jealousies, and distrusts, and despondings; the wiles and stratagems are all alike; for, after all, the stake is human happiness, whether he who risks it be a peer or a peasant!

While Owen vacillated between hope and fear, now, resolving to hazard an avowal of his love and take his stand on the result, now, deeming it better to trust to time and longer intimacy, other events were happening around, which could not fail to interest him deeply. The new agent had commenced his campaign with an activity before unknown. Arrears of rent were demanded to be peremptorily paid up; leases, whose exact conditions had not been fulfilled, were declared void; tenants occupying sub-let land were

noticed to quit; and all the threatening signs of that rigid management displayed, by which an estate is assumed to be "admirably regulated," and the agent's duty most creditably discharged.

Many of the arrears were concessions made by the landlord in seasons of hardship and distress, but were unrecorded as such in the rent-roll or the tenant's receipt. There had been no intention of ever redemanding them; and both parties had lost sight of the transaction until the sharp glance of a "new agent" discovered their existence. So of the leases: covenants to build, or plant, or drain, were inserted rather as contingencies, which prosperity might empower, than as actual conditions essential to be fulfilled; and as for sub-letting, it was simply the act by which a son or a daughter was portioned in the world, and enabled to commence the work of self-maintenance.

This slovenly system inflicted many evils. The demand of an extravagant rent rendered an abatement not a boon, but an act of imperative necessity; and while the overhanging debt supplied the landlord with a means of tyranny, it deprived the tenant of all desire to improve his

condition. "Why should I labour," said he, "when the benefit never can be mine?" The landlord then declaimed against ingratitude, at the time that the peasant spoke against oppression. Could they both be right? The impossibility of ever becoming independent soon suggested that dogged indifference, too often confounded with indolent habits. Sustenance was enough for him, who, if he earned more, should surrender it; hence the poor man became chained to his poverty. It was a weight which grew with his strength; privations might as well be incurred with little labour as with great; and he sunk down to the condition of a mere drudge, careless and despondent. "He can only take all I have!" was the cottier's philosophy; and the maxim suggested a corollary, that the "all" should be as little as might be.

But there were other grievances flowing from this source. The extent of these abatements usually depended on the representation of the tenants themselves, and such evidences as they could produce of their poverty and destitution. Hence a whole world of falsehood and dissimulation was fostered. Cabins were suffered to stand half-roofed; children left to shiver in rags and nakedness;

age and infirmity exhibited in attitudes of afflicting privation; habits of mendicity encouraged;—all, that they might impose upon the proprietor, and make him believe that any sum wrung from such as these must be an act of cruelty. If these schemes were sometimes successful, so in their failure they fell as heavy penalties upon the really destitute, for whose privations no pity was felt. Their misery, confounded in the general mass of dissimulation, was neglected; and for one who prospered in his falsehood, many were visited in their affliction.

That men in such circumstances as these should listen with greedy ears to any representation which reflected heavily on their wealthier neighbours, is little to be wondered at. The triumph of knavery and falsehood is a bad lesson for any people; but the fruitlessness of honest industry is, if possible, a worse one. Both were well taught by this system. And these things took place, not, be it observed, when the landlord or his agent were cruel and exacting—very far from it. They were the instances so popularly expatiated on by newspapers and journals; they were the cases headed—"Example for Landlords!" "Timely Benevolence!" and paragraphed thus:—"We

learn, with the greatest pleasure, that Mr. Muldrennin, of Kilbally-drennin, has, in consideration of the failure of the potato-crop, and the severe pressure of the season, kindly abated five per cent of all his rents. Let this admirable example be generally followed, and we shall once more see," &c. &c. There was no explanatory note to state the actual condition of that tenantry, or the amount of that rent from which the deduction was made. Mr. Muldrennin was then free to run his career of active puffery throughout the kingdom, and his tenantry to starve on as before.

Of all worldly judgments there is one that never fails. No man was ever instrumental, either actively or through neglect, to another's demoralisation, that he was not made to feel the recoil of his conduct on himself. Such had been palpably the result here. The confidence of the people lost, they had taken to themselves the only advisers in their power, and taught themselves to suppose that relief can only be effected by legislative enactments, or their own efforts. This lesson once learned, and they were politicians for life. The consequence has been, isolation from him to whom once all respect and attachment

were rendered; distrust and dislike follow—would that the catalogue went no further!

And again to our story. Owen was at last reminded, by the conversation of those about, that he too had received a summons from the new agent to attend at his office in Galway—a visit which, somehow or other, he had at first totally neglected; and, as the summons was not repeated, he finally supposed had been withdrawn by the agent, on learning the condition of his holding. As September drew to a close, however, he accompanied Phil Joyce on his way to Galway, prepared, if need be, to pay the half-year's rent, but ardently hoping the while it might never be demanded. It was a happy morning for poor Owen—the happiest of his whole life. He had gone over early to breakfast at Joyce's, and on reaching the house found Mary alone, getting ready the meal. Their usual distance in manner continued for some time; each talked of what their thoughts were least occupied on; and at last, after many a look from the window to see if Phil was coming, and wondering why he did not arrive, Owen drew a heavy sigh and said, "It's no use, Mary; divil a longer I can be suffering this way; take me or refuse

me you must this morning! I know well enough you don't care for me; but if ye don't like any one else better, who knows but in time, and with God's blessin', but ye'll be as fond of me, as I am of you?"

"And who told ye I didn't like some one else?" said Mary, with a sly glance; and her handsome features brightened up with a more than common brilliancy.

"The heavens make him good enough to desarve ye, I pray this day!" said Owen, with a trembling lip. "I'll go now! that's enough!"

"Won't ye wait for yer breakfast, Owen Connor? Won't ye stay a bit for my brother?"

"No, thank ye, ma'am. I'll not go into Galway to-day."

"Well, but don't go without your breakfast. Take a cup of tay anyhow, Owen dear!"

"Owen dear! O Mary, jewel! don't say them words, and I laving you for ever."

The young girl blushed deeply and turned away her head, but her crimsoned neck shewed that her shame was not departed. At the moment, Phil burst into the room, and standing for a second with his eyes fixed on

each in turn, he said, "Bad scran to ye, for women; but there's nothing but decate and wickedness in ye; divil a peace or ease I ever got when I quarrelled with Owen, and now that we're friends, ye're as cross and discontented as ever. Try what you can do with her yourself, Owen, my boy; for I give her up."

"'Tis not for me to thry it," said Owen, despondingly; "'tis another has the betther luck."

"That's not true, anyhow," cried Phil; "for she told me so herself."

"What! Mary, did ye say that?" said Owen, with a spring across the room; "did ye tell him that, darling?"

"Sure if I did, ye wouldn't believe me," said Mary, with a side-look; "women is nothing but deceit and wickedness."

"Sorra else," cried Owen, throwing his arm round her neck and kissing her; "and I'll never believe ye again, when ye say ye don't love me."

"'Tis a nice way to boil the eggs hard," said Phil, testily; "arrah, come over here and eat your breakfast, man; you'll have time enough for courting when we come back."

There needed not many words to a bargain which was already ratified; and before they left the house, the day of the wedding was actually fixed.

It was not without reason, then, that I said it was a happy day for Owen. Never did the long miles of the

road seem so short as now; while, with many a plan for the future, and many a day-dream of happiness to come, he went at Phil's side scarce crediting his good fortune to be real.

When they arrived at the agent's office in the square at Galway, they found a great many of their neighbours and friends already there; some, moody and depressed, yet lingered about the door, though they had apparently finished the business which brought them; others, anxious-looking and troubled, were waiting for their turn to enter. They were all gathered into little groups and parties, conversing eagerly together in Irish; and as each came out of the office, he was speedily surrounded by several others, questioning him as to how he had fared, and what success he met with.

Few came forth satisfied — not one happy-looking. Some, who were deficient a few shillings, were sent back again, and appeared with the money still in their hands, which they counted over and over, as if hoping to make it more. Others, trusting to promptitude in their payments, were seeking renewal of their tenures at the same rent, and found their requests coldly received, and no pledge

returned. Others, again, met with severe reproaches as to the condition of their dwellings and the neglected appearance of their farms, with significant hints that slovenly tenants would meet with little favour, and, although pleading sickness and distress, found the apology but slightly regarded.

"We thought the ould agent bad enough; but, faix, this one bates him out, entirely." Such was the comment of each and all, at the treatment met with, and such the general testimony of the crowd.

"Owen Connor! Owen Connor!" called out a voice, which Owen in a moment recognised as that of the fellow who had visited his cabin; and passing through the densely crowded hall, Owen forced his way into the small front parlour, where two clerks were seated at a table, writing.

"Over here; this way, if you please," said one of them, pointing with his pen to the place he should stand in. "What's your name?"

"Owen Connor, sir."

"What's the name of your holding?"

"Ballydorery, Knockshaughlin, and Cushaglin, is the townlands, and the mountain is Slieve-na-vick, sir."

"Owen Connor, Owen Connor," said the clerk, repeating the name three or four times over. "Oh, I remember; there has been no rent paid on your farm for some years."

"You're right there, sir," said Owen; "the landlord, God be good to him! tould my poor father—"

"Well, well, I have nothing to do with that—step inside—Mr. Lucas will speak to you himself;—shew this man inside, Luffey;" and the grim bailiff led the way into the back parlour, where two gentlemen were standing with their backs to the fire, chatting; they were both young and good-looking, and, to Owen's eyes, as unlike agents as could be.

"Well, what does this honest fellow want?—no abatement, I hope; a fellow with as good a coat as you have, can't be very ill off."

"True for you, yer honor, and I am not," said Owen in reply to the speaker, who seemed a few years younger than the other. "I was bid spake to yer honor about the little place I have up the mountains, and that Mr. Leslie gave my father rent-free ——"

"Oh, you are the man from Maam, an't you?"

"The same, sir; Owen Connor."

"That's the mountain I told you of, Major," said Lucas in a whisper; then, turning to Owen, resumed: "Well, I wished to see you very much, and speak to you. I've heard the story about your getting the land rent-free, and all that; but I find no mention of the matter in the books of the estate; there is not the slightest note nor memorandum that I can see, on the subject; and except your own word—which of course, as far as it goes, is all very well—I have nothing in your favour."

While these words were being spoken, Owen went through a thousand tortures; and many a deep conflicting passion warred within him. "Well, sir," said he at last, with a heavily drawn sigh, "well, sir, with God's blessin', I'll do my best; and whatever your honour says is fair, I'll thry and pay it: I suppose I'm undher rent since March last?"

"March! why, my good fellow, there's six years due last twenty-fifth; what are you thinking of?"

"Sure you don't mean I'm to pay, for what was given to me and my father?" said Owen, with a wild look that almost startled the agent.

"I mean precisely what I say," said Lucas, reddening with anger at the tone Owen assumed. "I mean that you owe six years and a half of rent; for which, if you neither produce receipt nor money, you'll never owe another half year for the same holding."

"And that's flat!" said the Major, laughing.

"And that's flat!" echoed Lucas, joining in the mirth.

Owen looked from one to the other of the speakers, and although never indisposed to enjoy a jest, he could not, for the life of him, conceive what possible occasion for merriment existed at the present moment.

"Plenty of grouse on that mountain, an't there?" said the Major, tapping his boot with his cane.

But, although the question was addressed to Owen, he was too deeply sunk in his own sad musings to pay it any attention.

"Don't you hear, my good fellow? Major Lynedoch asks, if there are not plenty of grouse on the mountain."

"Did the present landlord say that I was to pay this back rent?" said Owen deliberately, after a moment of deep thought.

"Mr. Leslie never gave me any particular instructions on your account," said Lucas smiling; "nor do I

suppose that his intentions regarding you are different from those respecting other tenants."

"I saved his life, then!" said Owen; and his eyes flashed with indignation as he spoke.

"And you saved a devilish good fellow, I can tell you," said the Major, smiling complacently, as though to hint that the act was a very sufficient reward for its own performance.

"The sorra much chance he had of coming to the property that day, anyhow, till I came up," said Owen, in a half soliloquy.

"What! were the savages about to scalp him? Eh!" asked the Major.

Owen turned a scowl towards him that stopped the already-begun laugh; while Lucas, amazed at the peasant's effrontery, said, "You needn't wait any longer, my good fellow; I have nothing more to say."

"I was going to ask yer honner, sir," said Owen, civilly, "if I paid the last half-year — I have it with me — if ye'll let me stay in the place till ye'll ask Mr. Leslie" ——

"But you forget, my friend, that a receipt for the last half-year is a receipt in full," said Lucas, interrupting.

"Sure, I don't want the receipt!" said Owen hur-

riedly; "keep it yourself. It isn't mistrusting the word of a gentleman I'd be."

"Eh, Lucas! blarney! I say, blarney, and no mistake!" cried the Major, half-suffocated with his own drollery.

"By my sowl! it's little blarney I'd give you, av I had ye at the side of Slieve-na-vick," said Owen; and the look he threw towards him left little doubt of his sincerity.

"Leave the room, sir! leave the room!" said Lucas, with a gesture towards the door.

"Dare I ax you where Mr. Leslie is now, sir?" said Owen, calmly.

"He's in London: No. 18 Belgrave Square."

"Would yer honour be so kind as to write it on a bit of paper for me?" said Owen, almost obsequiously.

Lucas sat down and wrote the address upon a card, handing it to Owen without a word.

"I humbly ax yer pardon, gentlemen, if I was rude to either of ye," said Owen, with a bow, as he moved towards the door; "but distress of mind doesn't improve a man's manners, if even he had more nor I have; but

if I get the little place yet, and that ye care for a day's sport ——"

"Eh, damme, you're not so bad, after all," said the Major: "I say, Lucas—is he, now?"

"Your servant, gentlemen," said Owen, who felt too indignant at the cool insolence with which his generous proposal was accepted, to trust himself with more; and with that, he left the room.

"Well, Owen, my boy," said Phil, who long since having paid his own rent, was becoming impatient at his friend's absence; "well, Owen, ye might have settled about the whole estate by this time. Why did they keep you so long?"

In a voice tremulous with agitation, Owen repeated the result of his interview, adding, as he concluded, "And now, there's nothing for it, Phil, but to see the landlord himself, and spake to him. I've got the name of the place he's in, here—it's somewhere in London; and I'll never turn my steps to home, before I get a sight of him. I've the half-year's rent here in my pocket, so that I'll have money enough, and to spare; and I only ax ye, Phil, to tell Mary how the whole case is, and to take

care of little Patsy for me till I come back—he's at your house now."

"Never fear, we'll take care of him, Owen; and I believe you're doing the best thing, after all."

The two friends passed the evening together, at least until the time arrived, when Owen took his departure by the mail. It was a sad termination to a day which opened so joyfully, and not all Phil's endeavours to rally and encourage his friend could dispossess Owen's mind of a gloomy foreboding that it was but the beginning of misfortune. "I have it over me," was his constant expression as they talked; "I have it over me, that something bad will come out of this;" and although his fears were vague and indescribable, they darkened his thoughts as effectually as real evils.

The last moment came, and Phil, with a hearty "God speed you," shook his friend's hand, and he was gone.

It would but protract my story, without fulfilling any of its objects, to speak of Owen's journey to England and on to London. It was a season of great distress in the manufacturing districts; several large failures had occurred —great stagnation of trade existed, and a general depression

was observable over the population of the great trading cities. There were daily meetings to consider the condition of the working classes, and the newspapers were crammed with speeches and resolutions in their favour. Placards were carried about the streets, with terrible announcements of distress and privation, and processions of wretched-looking men were met with on every side.

Owen, who, from motives of economy, prosecuted his journey on foot, had frequent opportunities of entering the dwellings of the poor, and observing their habits and modes of life. The everlasting complaints of suffering and want rung in his ears from morning till night; and yet, to his unaccustomed eyes, the evidences betrayed few, if any, of the evils of great poverty. The majority were not without bread — the very poorest had a sufficiency of potatoes. Their dwellings were neat-looking and comfortable, and, in comparison with what he was used to, actually luxurious. Neither were their clothes like the ragged and tattered coverings Owen had seen at home. The fustian jackets of the men were generally whole and well cared for; but the children more than all struck him. In Ireland, the young are usually the first to feel the pres-

sure of hardship — their scanty clothing rather the requirement of decency, than a protection against weather: here, the children were cleanly and comfortably dressed— none were in rags, few without shoes and stockings.

What could such people mean by talking of distress, Owen could by no means comprehend. "I wish we had a little of this kind of poverty in ould Ireland!" was the constant theme of his thoughts. "'Tis little they know what distress is! Faix, I wondher what they'd say if they saw Connemarra?" And yet, the privations they endured were such as had not been known for many years previous. Their sufferings were really great, and the interval between their ordinary habits as wide, as ever presented itself in the fortunes of the poor Irishman's life. But poverty, after all, is merely relative; and they felt that as "starvation" which Paddy would hail as a season of blessing and abundance.

"With a fine slated house over them, and plenty of furniture inside, and warm clothes, and enough to eat,— that's what they call distress! Musha! I'd like to see them, when they think they're comfortable," thought Owen, who at last lost all patience with such undeserved com-

plainings, and could with difficulty restrain himself from an open attack on their injustice.

He arrived in London at last, and the same evening hastened to Belgrave Square; for his thoughts were now, as his journey drew to a close, painfully excited at the near prospect of seeing his landlord. He found the house without difficulty: it was a splendid town-mansion, well befitting a man of large fortune; and Owen experienced an Irishman's gratification in the spacious and handsome building he saw before him. He knocked, at first timidly, and then, as no answer was returned, more boldly; but it was not before a third summons that the door was opened; and an old mean-looking woman asked him what he wanted.

"I want to see the masther, ma'am, av it's plazing to ye!" said Owen, leaning against the door-jamb as he spoke.

"The master? What do you mean?"

"Mr. Leslie himself, the landlord."

"Mr. Leslie is abroad—in Italy."

"Abroad! abroad!" echoed Owen, while a sickly faintness spread itself through his frame. "He's not out of England, is he?"

"I've told you he's in Italy, my good man."

"Erra! where's that at all?" cried Owen, despairingly.

"I'm sure I don't know; but I can give you the address, if you want it.

"No, thank ye, ma'am—it's too late for that, now," said he. The old woman closed the door, and the poor fellow sat down upon the steps, overcome by this sad and unlooked-for result.

It was evening. The streets were crowded with people, —some on foot, some on horseback and in carriages. The glare of splendid equipages, the glittering of wealth—the great human tide rolled past, unnoticed by Owen, for his own sorrows filled his whole heart.

Men in all their worldliness,—some, on errands of pleasure, some, care-worn and thoughtful, some, brimful of expectation, and others, downcast and dejected, moved past: scarcely one remarked that poor peasant, whose travelled and tired look, equally with his humble dress, bespoke one who came from afar.

"Well, God help me, what's best for me to do now?" said Owen Connor, as he sat ruminating on his fortune; and, unable to find any answer to his own question, he

arose and walked slowly along, not knowing nor caring whither.

There is no such desolation as that of a large and crowded city to him, who, friendless and alone, finds himself a wanderer within its walls. The man of education and taste looks around him for objects of interest or amusement, yet saddened by the thought that he is cut off from all intercourse with his fellow-men; but, to the poor unlettered stranger, how doubly depressing are all these things! Far from speculating on the wealth and prosperity around him, he feels crushed and humiliated in its presence. His own humble condition appears even more lowly in contrast with such evidences of splendour; and instinctively he retreats from the regions where fashion, and rank, and riches abound, to the gloomy abodes of less-favoured fortunes.

When Owen awoke the following morning, and looked about him in the humble lodging he had selected, he could scarcely believe that already the end of his long journey had been met by failure. Again and again he endeavoured to remember if he had seen his landlord, and what reply he had received; but except a vague sense of disappointment, he could fix on nothing. It was only as he drew

near the great mansion once more, that he could thoroughly recollect all that had happened; and then, the truth flashed on his mind, and he felt all the bitterness of his misfortune. I need not dwell on this theme. The poor man turned again homeward; why, he could not well have answered, had any been cruel enough to ask him. The hope that buoyed him up before, now spent and exhausted, his step was slow and his heart heavy, while his mind, racked with anxieties and dreads, increased his bodily debility, and made each mile of the way seem ten.

On the fourth day of his journey—wet through from morning till late in the evening—he was seized with a shivering-fit, followed soon after by symptoms of fever. The people in whose house he had taken shelter for the night, had him at once conveyed to the infirmary, where for eight weeks he lay dangerously ill; a relapse of his malady, on the day before he was to be pronounced convalescent, occurred, and the third month was nigh its close, ere Owen left the hospital.

It was more than a week ere he could proceed on his journey, which he did at last, moving only a few miles each day, and halting before nightfall. Thus wearily

plodding on, he reached Liverpool at last, and about the middle of January arrived in his native country once more.

His strength regained, his bodily vigour restored, he had made a long day's journey to reach home, and it was about ten o'clock of a bright and starry night that he crossed the mountains that lie between Ballinrobe and Maam. To Owen, the separation from his home seemed like a thing of years long; and his heart was full to bursting as each well-remembered spot appeared, bringing back a thousand associations of his former life. As he strode along he stopped frequently to look down towards the village, where, in each light that twinkled, he could mark the different cabins of his old friends. At length, the long low farmhouse of the Joyces came into view—he could trace it by the line of light that glittered from every window—and from this, Owen could not easily tear himself away. Muttering a heartfelt prayer for those beneath that roof, he at last moved on, and near midnight gained the little glen where his cabin stood. Scarcely, however, had he reached the spot, when the fierce challenge of a dog attracted him. It was not his own poor

colley—he knew his voice well—and Owen's blood ran chilly at the sound of that strange bark. He walked on, however, resolutely grasping his stick in his hand, and suddenly, as he turned the angle of the cliff, there stood his cabin, with a light gleaming from the little window.

"'Tis Phil Joyce maybe has put somebody in, to take care of the place," said he; but his fears gave no credence to the surmise.

Again the dog challenged, and at the same moment the door was opened, and a man's voice called out, "Who comes there?" The glare of the fire at his back shewed that he held a musket in his hand.

"'Tis me, Owen Connor," answered Owen, half sulkily, for he felt that indescribable annoyance a man will experience at any question, as to his approaching his own dwelling, even though in incognito.

"Stay back, then," cried the other; "if you advance another step, I'll send a bullet through you."

"Send a bullet through me!" cried Owen, scornfully, yet even more astonished than indignant. "Why, isn't a man to be let go to his own house, without being fired at?"

"I'll be as good as my word," said the fellow; and as he spoke, Owen saw him lift the gun to his shoulder and steadily hold it there. "Move one step now, and you'll see if I'm not."

Owen's first impulse was to rush forward at any hazard, and if not wounded, to grapple with his adversary; but he reflected for a second that some great change must have occurred in his absence, which, in all likelihood, no act of daring on his part could avert or alter. "I'll wait for morning, anyhow," thought he; and without another word, or deigning any answer to the other, he slowly turned, and retraced his steps down the mountain.

There was a small mud hovel at the foot of the mountain, where Owen determined to pass the night. The old man who lived there, had been a herd formerly, but age and rheumatism had left him a cripple, and he now lived on the charity of the neighbours.

"Poor Larry! I don't half like disturbing ye," said Owen, as he arrived at the miserable contrivance of wattles that served for a door; but the chill night air, and his weary feet decided the difficulty, and he called out, "Larry—Larry Daly! open the door for me—Owen Connor. 'Tis me!"

The old man slept with the light slumber of age, and despite the consequences of his malady, managed to hobble to the door in a few seconds. "Oh! wirra, wirra! Owen, my son!" cried he, in Irish; "I hoped I'd never see ye here again—my own darlin'."

"That's a dhroll welcome, anyhow, Larry, for a man coming back among his own people."

"'Tis a thrue one, as sure as I live in sin. The Lord help us, this is bad fortune."

"What do you mean, Larry? What did I ever do to disgrace my name, that I wouldn't come back here?"

"'Tisn't what ye done, honey, but what's done upon ye. Oh, wirra, wirra; 'tis a black day that led ye home here."

It was some time before Owen could induce the old man to moderate his sorrows, and relate the events which had occurred in his absence. I will not weary my reader by retailing the old man's prolixity, but tell them in the fewest words I am able, premising, that I must accompany the narrative by such explanations as I may feel necessary.

Soon after Owen's departure for England, certain dis-

turbances occurred through the country. The houses of the gentry were broken open at night and searched for arms by men with blackened faces and in various disguises to escape recognition. Threatening notices were served on many of the resident families, menacing them with the worst if they did not speedily comply with certain conditions, either in the discharge of some obnoxious individuals from their employment, or the restoration of some plot of ground to its former holder. Awful denunciations were uttered against any who should dare to occupy land from which a former tenant was ejected; and so terrible was the vengeance exacted, and so sudden its execution, that few dared to transgress the orders of these savage denunciators. The law of the land seemed to stand still, justice appeared appalled and affrighted, by acts which bespoke deep and wide-spread conspiracy. The magistrates assembled to deliberate on what was to be done; and the only one who ventured to propose a bold and vigorous course of acting was murdered on his way homeward. Meanwhile, Mr. Lucas, whose stern exactions had given great discontent, seemed determined to carry through his measures at any risk. By influence with the government

he succeeded in obtaining a considerable police-force, and, under cover of these, he issued his distress-warrants and executions, distrained and sold, probably with a severity increased by the very opposition he met with.

The measures undertaken by government to suppress outrage failed most signally. The difficulty of arresting a suspected individual was great in a country where a large force was always necessary. The difficulty of procuring evidence against him was still greater; for even such as were not banded in the conspiracy, had a greater dread of the reproach of informer, than of any other imputation; and when these two conditions were overcome, the last and greatest of all difficulties remained behind,—no jury could be found to convict, when their own lives might pay the penalty of their honesty. While thus, on one side, went the agent, with his cumbrous accompaniments of law-officers and parchments, police constables and bailiffs, to effect a distress or an ejectment; the midnight party with arms patrolled the country, firing the haggards and the farmhouses, setting all law at defiance, and asserting in their own bloody vengeance the supremacy of massacre.

Not a day went over without its chronicle of crime; the very calendar was red with murder. Friends parted with a fervour of feeling, that shewed none knew if they would meet on the morrow; and a dark, gloomy suspicion prevailed through the land, each dreading his neighbour, and deeming his isolation more secure than all the ties of friendship. All the bonds of former love, all the relations of kindred and affection, were severed by this terrible league. Brothers, fathers, and sons were arrayed against each other. A despotism was thus set up, which even they who detested dared not oppose. The very defiance it hurled at superior power, awed and terrified themselves. Nor was this feeling lessened when they saw that these dreadful acts—acts so horrible as to make men shudder at the name of Ireland when heard in the farthest corner of Europe—that these had their apologists in the press, that even a designation was invented for them, and murder could be spoken of patriotically as the "Wild Justice" of the people.

There is a terrible contagion in crime. The man whose pure heart had never harboured a bad thought cannot live untainted where wickedness is rife. The really base and depraved were probably not many; but there were hard-

ships and sufferings every where; misery abounded in the land—misery too dreadful to contemplate. It was not difficult to connect such sufferings with the oppressions, real or supposed, of the wealthier classes. Some, believed the theory with all the avidity of men who grasp at straws when drowning; others, felt a savage pleasure at the bare thought of reversing the game of sufferance; while many, mixed up their own wrongs with what they regarded as national grievances, and converted their private vengeance into a patriotic daring. Few stood utterly aloof, and even of these, none would betray the rest.

The temporary success of murder, too, became a horrible incentive to its commission. The agent shot, the law he had set in motion stood still, the process fell powerless; the "Wild Justice" superseded the slower footsteps of common law, and the murderer saw himself installed in safety, when he ratified his bond in the blood of his victim.

Habitual poverty involves so much of degradation, that recklessness of life is its almost invariable accompaniment; and thus, many of these men ceased to speculate on the future, and followed the dictates of their leaders in blind

and dogged submission. There were many, too, who felt a kind of savage enthusiasm in the career of danger, and actually loved the very hazard of the game. Many more had private wrongs—old debts of injury to wipe out—and grasped at the occasion to acquit them; but even when no direct motives existed, the terror of evil consequences induced great numbers to ally themselves with this terrible conspiracy, and when not active partisans, at least to be faithful and secret confidants.

Among the many dispossessed by the agent was Owen Connor. Scarcely had he left the neighbourhood, than an ejectment was served against him; and the bailiff, by whose representations Owen was made to appear a man of dangerous character, installed in his mountain-farm. This fellow was one of those bold, devil-may-care ruffians, who survive in every contest longer than men of more circumspect courage; and Lucas was not sorry to find that he could establish such an outpost in this wild and dreary region. Well armed, and provided with a sufficiency of ammunition, he promised to maintain his strong-hold against any force—a boast not so unreasonable, as there was only one approach to the cabin, and that, a narrow

path on the very verge of a precipice. Owen's unexpected appearance was in his eyes, therefore, a signal for battle; he supposed that he was come back to assert his ancient right, and in this spirit it was, he menaced him with instant death if he advanced another step. Indeed, he had been more than once threatened that Owen's return would be a "dark day" for him, and prepared himself for a meeting with him, as an occasion which might prove fatal to either. These threats, not sparingly bandied by those who felt little inclination to do battle on their own account, had become so frequent, that many looked for Owen's reappearance as for an event of some moment.

Old Larry often heard these reports, and well knowing Owen's ardent disposition and passionate temper, and how easily he became the tool of others, when any deed of more than ordinary hazard was presented to him, grieved deeply over the consequences such promptings might lead to; and thus it was, that he received him with that outburst of sorrow for which Owen was little prepared.

If Owen was shocked as he listened first to the tale of anarchy and bloodshed the old man revealed, a savage pleasure came over him afterwards, to think, what terror

these midnight maraudings were making in the hearts of those who lived in great houses, and had wealth and influence. His own wrongs rankled too deeply in his breast to make him an impartial hearer; and already, many of his sympathies were with the insurgents.

It was almost day-break ere he could close his eyes; for although tired and worn out, the exciting themes he was revolving banished every thought of sleep, and made him restless and fretful. His last words to Larry, as he lay down to rest, were a desire that he might remain for a day or two concealed in his cabin, and that none of the neighbours should learn anything of his arrival. The truth was, he had not courage to face his former friends, nor could he bear to meet the Joyces: what step he purposed to take in the mean while, and how to fashion his future course, it is hard to say: for the present, he only asked time.

The whole of the following day he remained within the little hut; and when night came, at last ventured forth to breathe the fresh air and move his cramped limbs. His first object, then, was to go over to Joyce's house, with no intention of visiting its inmates — far from it. The poor

fellow had conceived a shrinking horror of the avowal he should be compelled to make of his own failure, and did not dare to expose himself to such a test.

The night was dark and starless: that heavy, clouded darkness which follows a day of rain in our western climate, and makes the atmosphere seem loaded and weighty. To one less accustomed than was Owen, the pathway would have been difficult to discover; but he knew it well in every turning and winding, every dip of the ground, and every rock and streamlet in the course. There was the stillness of death on every side; and although Owen stopped more than once to listen, not the slightest sound could be heard. The gloom and dreariness suited well the "habit of his soul." His own thoughts were not of the brightest, and his step was slow and his head downcast as he went.

At last the glimmering of light, hazy and indistinct from the foggy atmosphere, came into view, and a few minutes after, he entered the little enclosure of the small garden which flanked one side of the cabin. The quick bark of a dog gave token of his approach, and Owen found some difficulty in making himself recognised by the animal, al-

though an old acquaintance. This done, he crept stealthily to the window from which the gleam of light issued. The shutters were closed, but between their joinings he obtained a view of all within.

At one side of the fire was Mary—his own Mary, when last he parted with her. She was seated at a spinning-wheel, but seemed less occupied with the work, than bent on listening to some noise without. Phil also stood in the attitude of one inclining his ear to catch a sound, and held a musket in his hand like one ready to resist attack. A farm-servant, a lad of some eighteen, stood at his side, armed with a horse-pistol, his features betraying no very equivocal expression of fear and anxiety. Little Patsy nestled at Mary's side, and with his tiny hands had grasped her arm closely.

They stood there, as if spell-bound. It was evident they were afraid, by the slightest stir, to lose the chance of hearing any noise without; and when Mary at last lifted up her head, as if to speak, a quick motion of her brother's hand warned her to be silent. What a history did that group reveal to Owen, as, with a heart throbbing fiercely, he gazed upon it! But a few short months back,

and the inmates of that happy home knew not if at night the door was even latched; the thought of attack or danger never crossed their minds. The lordly dwellers in a castle felt less security in their slumbers than did these peasants; now, each night brought a renewal of their terrors. It came no longer the season of mutual greeting around the wintry hearth, the hour of rest and repose; but a time of anxiety and dread, a gloomy period of doubt, harassed by every breeze that stirred, and every branch that moved.

"'Tis nothing *this time*," said Phil, at last. "Thank God for that same!" and he replaced his gun above the chimney, while Mary blessed herself devoutly, and seemed to repeat a prayer to herself. Owen gave one parting look, and retired as noiselessly as he came.

To creep forth with the dark hours, and stand at this window, became with Owen, now, the whole business of life. The weary hours of the day were passed in the expectancy of that brief season—the only respite he enjoyed from the corroding cares of his own hard fortune. The dog, recognising him, no longer barked as he approached; and he could stand unmolested and look at

that hearth, beside which he was wont once to sit and feel at home.

Thus was it, as the third week was drawing to a close, when old Larry, who had ventured down to the village to make some little purchase, brought back the news, that information had been sworn by the bailiff against Owen Connor, for threatening him with death, on pain of his not abandoning his farm. The people would none of them give any credit to the oath, as none knew of Owen's return; and the allegation was only regarded as another instance of the perjury resorted to by their opponents, to crush and oppress them.

"They'll have the police out to-morrow, I hear, to search after ye; and sure the way ye've kept hid will be a bad job, if they find ye after all."

"*If* they do, Larry!" said Owen, laughing; "but I think it will puzzle them to do so." And the very spirit of defiance prevented Owen at once surrendering himself to the charge against him. He knew every cave and hiding-place of the mountain, from childhood upwards, and felt proud to think how he could baffle all pursuit, no matter how persevering his enemies. It was essential, however,

that he should leave his present hiding-place at once; and no sooner was it dark, than Owen took leave of old Larry and issued forth. The rain was falling in torrents, accompanied by a perfect hurricane, as he left the cabin; fierce gusty blasts swept down the bleak mountain-side, and with wild and melancholy cadence poured along the valley; the waters of the lake plashed and beat upon the rocky shore; the rushing torrents, as they forced their way down the mountain, swelled the uproar, in which the sound of crashing branches and even rocks were mingled.

"'Tis a dreary time to take to the cowld mountain for a home," said Owen, as he drew his thick frieze coat around him, and turned his shoulder to the storm. "I hardly think the police, or the king's throops either, will try a chase after me this night."

There was more of gratified pride in this muttered reflection than at first sight might appear; for Owen felt a kind of heroism in his own daring at that moment, that supported and actually encouraged him in his course. The old spirit of bold defiance, which for ages has characterised the people; the resolute resistance to autho-

rity, or to tyranny, which centuries have not erased, was strong in his hardy nature; and he asked for nothing better, than to pit his own skill, ingenuity, and endurance against his opponents, for the mere pleasure of the encounter.

As there was little question on Owen's mind that no pursuit of him would take place on such a night, he resolved to pass the time till day-break within the walls of the old churchyard, the only spot he could think of which promised any shelter. There was a little cell or crypt there, where he could safely remain till morning. An hour's walking brought him to the little gate, the last time he had entered which, was at his poor father's funeral. His reflection, now, was rather on his own altered condition since that day; but even on that thought he suffered himself not to dwell. In fact, a hardy determination to face the future, in utter forgetfulness of the past, was the part he proposed to himself; and he did his utmost to bend his mind to the effort.

As he drew near the little crypt I have mentioned, he was amazed to see the faint flickering of a fire within it. At first a superstitious fear held him back, and he

rapidly repeated some prayers to himself; but the emotion was soon over, and he advanced boldly toward it. "Who's there? stand! or give the word!" said a gruff voice from within. Owen stood still, but spoke not. The challenge was like that of a sentry, and he half-feared he had unwittingly strayed within the precincts of a patrol. "Give the word at once! or you'll never spake another," was the savage speech which, accompanied by a deep curse, now met his ears, while the click of a gun-cock was distinctly audible.

"I'm a poor man, without a home or a shelter," said Owen, calmly; "and what's worse, I'm without arms, or maybe you wouldn't talk so brave."

"What's yer name? Where are ye from?"

"I'm Owen Connor; that's enough for ye, whoever ye are," replied he, resolutely; "it's a name I'm not ashamed nor afraid to say, anywhere."

The man within the cell threw a handful of dry furze upon the smouldering flame, and while he remained concealed himself, took a deliberate survey of Owen as he stood close to the doorway. "You're welcome, Owen," said he, in an altered voice, and one which Owen imme-

diately recognised as that of the old blacksmith, Miles Regan; "you're welcome, my boy! better late than never, anyhow!"

"What do you mean, Miles? 'Tisn't expecting me here ye were, I suppose?"

"'Tis just that same then, I was expecting this many a day," said Miles, as with a rugged grasp of both hands he drew Owen within the narrow cell. "And 't'aint me only was expecting it, but every one else. Here, avich, taste this—ye're wet and cowld both; that will put life in ye—and it never ped the king sixpence."

And he handed Owen a quart bottle as he spoke, the odour of which was unmistakeable enough, to bear testimony to his words.

"And what brings you here, Miles, in the name of God?" said Owen, for his surprise at the meeting increased every moment.

"'Tis your own case, only worse," said the other, with a drunken laugh, for the poteen had already affected his head.

"And what's that, if I might make bould?" said Owen, rather angrily.

"Just that I got the turn-out, my boy. That new chap, they have over the property, sould me out, root and branch; and as I didn't go quiet, ye see, they brought the polis down, and there was a bit of a fight, to take the two cows away; and somehow"—here he snatched the bottle rudely from Owen's hand, and swallowed a copious draught of it—"and, somehow, the corporal was killed, and I thought it better to be away for a while—for, at the inquest, though the boys would take 'the vestment' they seen him shot by one of his comrades, there was a bit of a smash in his skull, ye see"—here he gave a low fearful laugh—"that fitted neatly to the top of my eleven-pound hammer; ye comprehend?"

Owen's blood ran cold as he said, "Ye don't mean it was you that killed him?"

"I do then," replied the other, with a savage grin, as he placed his face within a few inches of Owen's. "There's a hundred pounds blood-money for ye, now, if ye give the information! A hundred pounds," muttered he to himself; "musha, I never thought they'd give ten shillings for my own four bones before!"

Owen scorned to reply to the insinuation of his

turning informer, and sat moodily thinking over the event.

"Well, I'll be going, anyhow," said he rising, for his abhorrence of his companion made him feel the storm and the hurricane a far preferable alternative.

"The divil a one foot ye'll leave this, my boy," said Miles, grasping him with the grip of his gigantic hand; "no, no, ma bouchal, 'tisn't so easy airned as ye think; a hundred pounds, naboclish!

"Leave me free! let go my arm!" said Owen, whose anger now rose at the insolence of this taunt.

"I'll break it across my knee, first," said the infuriated ruffian, as he half imitated by a gesture his horrid threat.

There was no comparison in point of bodily strength between them; for although Owen was not half the other's age, and had the advantage of being perfectly sober, the smith was a man of enormous power, and held him, as though he were a child in his grasp.

"So that's what you'd be at, my boy, is it?" said Miles, scoffing; "it's the fine thrade you choose! but maybe it's not so pleasant, after all. Stay still there—

be quiet, I say—by ——" and here he uttered a most awful oath—"if you rouse me, I'll paste your brains against that wall;" and as he spoke, he dashed his closed fist against the rude and crumbling masonry, with a force that shook several large stones from their places, and left his knuckles one indistinguishable mass of blood and gore.

"That's brave, anyhow," said Owen, with a bitter mockery, for his own danger, at the moment, could not repress his contempt for the savage conduct of the other.

Fortunately, the besotted intellect of the smith made him accept the speech in a very different sense, and he said, "There never was the man yet, I wouldn't give him two blows at me, for one at him, and mine to be the last."

"I often heard of that before," said Owen, who saw that any attempt to escape by main force was completely out of the question, and that stratagem alone could present a chance.

"Did ye ever hear of Dan Lenahan?" said Miles, with a grin; "what I did to Dan: I was to fight him wid one hand, and the other tied behind my back; and when

he came up to shake hands wid me before the fight, I just put my thumb in my hand, that way, and I smashed his four fingers over it."

"There was no fight that day, anyhow, Miles."

"Thrue for ye, boy; the sport was soon over—raich me over the bottle," and with that, Miles finished the poteen at a draught, and then lay back against the wall, as if to sleep. Still, he never relinquished his grasp, but, as he fell off asleep, held him as in a vice.

As Owen sat thus a prisoner, turning over in his mind every possible chance of escape, he heard the sound of feet and men's voices rapidly approaching; and, in a few moments, several men turned into the churchyard, and came towards the crypt. They were conversing in a low but hurried voice, which was quickly hushed as they came nearer.

"What's this," cried one, as he entered the cell; "Miles has a prisoner here!"

"Faix, he has so, Mickey;" answered Owen, for he recognised in the speaker an old friend and schoolfellow. The rest came hurriedly forward at the words, and soon Owen found himself among a number of his former com-

panions. Two or three of the party were namesakes and relations.

The explanation of his capture was speedily given, and they all laughed heartily at Owen's account of his ingenious efforts at flattery.

"Av the poteen held out, Owen dear, ye wouldn't have had much trouble; but he can drink two quarts before he loses his strength."

In return for his narrative, they freely and frankly told their own story. They had been out arms-hunting—unsuccessfully, however—their only exploit being the burning of a haggard belonging to a farmer who refused to join the "rising."

Owen felt greatly relieved to discover, that his old friends regarded the smith with a horror fully as great as his own. But they excused themselves for the companionship by saying, "What are we to do with the crayture? Ye wouldn't have us let him be taken?" And thus they were compelled to practise every measure for the security of one they had no love for, and whose own excesses increased the hazard tenfold.

The marauding exploits they told of, were, to Owen's

ears, not devoid of a strange interest, the danger alone had its fascination for him; and, artfully interwoven as their stories were with sentiments of affected patriotism and noble aspirations for the cause of their country, they affected him strongly.

For, strange as it may seem, a devotion to country—a mistaken sense of national honour—prompted many to these lawless courses. Vague notions of confiscated lands to be restored to their rightful possessors; ancient privileges reconferred; their church once more endowed with its long-lost wealth and power: such were the motives of the more high-spirited and independent. Others sought redress for personal grievances; some real or imaginary hardship they laboured under; or, perhaps, as was not unfrequent, they bore the memory of some old grudge or malice, which they hoped now to have an opportunity of requiting. Many were there, who, like the weak-minded in all popular commotions, float with the strong tide, whichever way it may run. They knew not the objects aimed at; they were ignorant of the intentions of their leaders; but would not lie under the stain of cowardice among their companions, nor shrink from any cause where there

was danger, if only for that very reason. Thus was the mass made up, of men differing in various ways; but all held together by the common tie of a Church and a Country. It might be supposed that the leaders in such a movement would be those who, having suffered some grievous wrong, were reckless enough to adventure on any course that promised vengeance;—very far from this. The principal promoters of the insurrection were of the class of farmers—men well to do, and reputed, in many cases, wealthy. The instruments by which they worked were indeed of the very poorer class—the cottier, whose want and misery had eat into his nature, and who had as little room for fear as for hope in his chilled heart. Some injury sustained by one of these, some piece of justice denied him; his ejection from his tenement; a chance word, perhaps, spoken to him in anger by his landlord or the agent, were the springs which moved a man like this, and brought him into confederacy with those who promised him a speedy repayment of his wrongs, and flattered him into the belief that his individual case had all the weight and importance of a national question. Many insurrectionary movements have grown into the magnitude of sys-

tematic rebellion from the mere assumption on the part of others, that they were prearranged and predetermined. The self-importance suggested by a bold opposition to the law, is a strong agent in arming men against its terrors. The mock martyrdom of Ireland is in this way, perhaps, her greatest and least curable evil.

Owen was, of all others, the man they most wished for amongst them. Independent of his personal courage and daring, he was regarded as one fruitful in expedients, and never deterred by difficulties. This mingled character of cool determination and headlong impulse, made him exactly suited to become a leader; and many a plot was thought of, to draw him into their snares, when the circumstances of his fortune thus anticipated their intentions.

It would not forward the object of my little tale to dwell upon the life he now led. It was indeed an existence full of misery and suffering. To exaggerate the danger of his position, his companions asserted that the greatest efforts were making for his capture, rewards offered, and spies scattered far and wide through the country; and while they agreed with him that nothing could be laid to his charge, they still insisted, that were

he once taken, false-swearing and perjury would bring him to the gallows, "as it did many a brave boy before him."

Half-starved, and harassed by incessant change of place; tortured by the fevered agony of a mind halting between a deep purpose of vengeance and a conscious sense of innocence, his own daily sufferings soon brought down his mind to that sluggish state of gloomy desperation, in which the very instincts of our better nature seem dulled and blunted. "I cannot be worse!" was his constant expression, as he wandered alone by some unfrequented mountain-path, or along the verge of some lonely ravine. "I cannot be worse!" It is an evil moment that suggests a thought like this!

Each night he was accustomed to repair to the old churchyard, where some of the "boys," as they called themselves, assembled to deliberate on future measures, or talk over the past. It was less in sympathy with their plans that Owen came, than for the very want of human companionship. His utter solitude gave him a longing to hear their voices, and see their faces; while in their recitals of outrage, he felt that strange pleasure

the sense of injury supplies, at any tale of sorrow and suffering.

At these meetings the whisky-bottle was never forgotten; and while some were under a pledge not to take more than a certain quantity—a vow they kept most religiously—others drank deeply. Among these was Owen. The few moments of reckless forgetfulness he then enjoyed were the coveted minutes of his long dreary day, and he wished for night to come as the last solace that was left him.

His companions knew him too well, to endeavour by any active influence to implicate him in their proceedings. They cunningly left the work to time and his own gloomy thoughts; watching, however, with eager anxiety, how, gradually he became more and more interested in all their doings; how, by degrees he ceased even the half-remonstrance against some deed of unnecessary cruelty; and listened with animation where before he but heard with apathy, if not repugnance. The weeds of evil grow rankest in the rich soil of a heart whose nature, once noble, has been perverted and debased. Ere many weeks passed over, Owen, so far from disliking the theme of

violence and outrage, became half-angry with his comrades, that they neither proposed any undertaking to him, nor even asked his assistance amongst them.

This spirit grew hourly stronger in him; offended pride worked within his heart during the tedious days he spent alone, and he could scarcely refrain from demanding what lack of courage and daring they saw in him, that he should be thus forgotten and neglected.

In this frame of mind, irresolute as to whether he should not propose himself for some hazardous scheme, or still remain a mere spectator of others, he arrived one evening in the old churchyard. Of late, "the boys," from preconcerted arrangements among themselves, had rather made a show of cold and careless indifference in their manner to Owen—conduct which deeply wounded him.

As he approached now the little crypt, he perceived that a greater number than usual were assembled through the churchyard, and many were gathered in little knots and groups, talking eagerly together; a half-nod, a scarcely muttered "Good even," was all the salutation he met, as he moved towards the little cell, where, by the blaze of a piece of bog-pine, a party were regaling themselves—the

custom and privilege of those who had been last out on any marauding expedition. A smoking pot of potatoes and some bottles of whisky formed the entertainment, at which Owen stood a longing and famished spectator.

"Will yez never be done there eatin' and crammin' yerselves?" said a gruff voice from the crowd to the party within; "and ye know well enough there's business to be done to-night."

"And ain't we doing it?" answered one of the feasters. "Here's your health, Peter!" and so saying, he took a very lengthened draught from the "poteen" bottle.

"'Tis the thrade ye like best, anyhow," retorted the other. "Come, boys; be quick now!"

The party did not wait a second bidding, but arose from the place, and removing the big pot to make more room, they prepared the little cell for the reception of some other visitors.

"That's it now! We'll not be long about it. Larry, have yez the 'deck,' my boy?"

"There's the book, darlint," said a short, little, decrepid creature, speaking with an asthmatic effort, as he produced a pack of cards, which, if one were to judge

from the dirt, made the skill of the game consist as much in deciphering as playing them.

"Where's Sam M'Guire?" called out the first speaker, in a voice loud enough to be heard over the whole space around; and the name was repeated from voice to voice, till it was replied to by one who cried—

"Here, sir; am I wanted?"

"You are, Sam; and 'tis yourself's always to the fore when we need yez."

"I hope so indeed," said Sam, as he came forward, a flush of gratified pride on his hardy cheek. He was a young, athletic fellow, with a fine manly countenance, expressive of frankness and candour.

"Luke Heffernan! where's Luke?" said the other.

"I'm here beside ye," answered a dark-visaged, middle-aged man, with the collar of his frieze coat buttoned high on his face; "ye needn't be shouting my name that way—there may be more bad than good among uz."

"There's not an informer, any way—if that's what ye mean," said the other quickly. "Gavan Daly! Call Gavan Daly, will ye, out there?" And the words were

passed from mouth to mouth in a minute, but no one replied to the summons.

"He's not here — Gavan's not here!" was the murmured answer of the crowd, given in a tone that boded very little in favour of its absent owner.

"Not here!" said the leader, as he crushed the piece of paper, from which he read, in his hand; "not here! Where is he, then? Does any of yez know where's Gavan Daly?"

But there was no answer.

"Can no body tell?—is he sick?—or is any belonging to him sick and dying, that he isn't here this night, as he swore to be?"

"I saw him wid a new coat on him this morning early in Oughterarde, and he said he was going to see a cousin of his down below Oranmore," said a young lad from the outside of the crowd, and the speaker was in a moment surrounded by several, anxious to find out some other particulars of the absent man. It was evident that the boy's story was far from being satisfactory, and the circumstance of Daly's wearing a new coat, was one freely commented on by those who well knew how

thoroughly they were in the power of any who should betray them.

"He's in the black list this night," said the leader, as he motioned the rest to be silent; "that's where I put him now; and see, all of yez — mind my words — if any of uz comes to harm, it will go hard but some will be spared; and if there was only one remaining, he wouldn't be the cowardly villain not to see vengeance on Gavan Daly, for what he's done."

A murmur of indignation at the imputed treachery of the absent man buzzed through the crowd; while one fellow, with a face flushed by drink, and eyes bleared and bloodshot, cried out: "And are ye to stop here all night, calling for the boy that's gone down to bethray yez? Is there none of yez will take his place?"

"I will! I will! I'm ready and willin'!" were uttered by full twenty, in a breath.

"Who will ye have with yez? take your own choice!" said the leader, turning towards M'Guire and Heffernan, who stood whispering eagerly together.

"There's the boy I'd take out of five hundred, av he

was the same I knew once," said M'Guire, laying his hand on Owen's shoulder.

"Begorra then, I wondher what ye seen in him lately to give you a consate out of him," cried Heffernan, with a rude laugh. "'Tisn't all he's done for the cause anyway."

Owen started, and fixed his eyes first on one, then on the other of the speakers; but his look was rather the vacant stare of one awakening from a heavy sleep, than the expression of any angry passion — for want and privation had gone far to sap his spirit, as well as his bodily strength.

"There, avich, taste that," said a man beside him, who was struck by his pale and wasted cheek, and miserable appearance.

Owen almost mechanically took the bottle, and drank freely, though the contents was strong poteen.

"Are ye any betther now?" said Heffernan, with a sneering accent.

"I am," said Owen, calmly, for he was unconscious of the insolence passed off on him; "I'm a deal better."

"Come along, ma bouchal!" cried M'Guire; "come into the little place with us, here."

"What do ye want with me, boys?" asked Owen, looking about him through the crowd.

"'Tis to take a hand at the cards, divil a more," said an old fellow near, and the speech sent a savage laugh among the rest.

"I'm ready and willin'," said Owen; "but sorra farthen I've left me to play; and if the stakes is high—"

"Faix, that's what they're not," said Heffernan; "they're the lowest ever ye played for."

"Tell me what it is, anyway," cried Owen.

"Just, the meanest thing at all—the life of the blaguard that turned yerself out of yer holdin'—Lucas the agent."

"To kill Lucas?"

"That same; and if ye don't like the game, turn away and make room for a boy that has more spirit in him."

"Who says I ever was afeard?" said Owen, on whom now the whisky was working. "Is it Luke Heffernan dares to face me down?—come out here, fair, and see will ye say it again."

"If you won't join the cause, you mustn't be bringing bad blood among us," cried the leader, in a determined tone; "there's many a brave boy here to-night would give his right hand to get the offer you did."

"I'm ready—here I am, ready now," shouted Owen wildly; "tell me what you want me to do, and see whether I will or no."

A cheer broke from the crowd at these words, and all within his reach stretched out their hands to grasp Owen's; and commendations were poured on him from every side.

Meanwhile Heffernan and his companion had cleared the little crypt of its former occupants, and having heaped fresh wood upon the fire, sat down before the blaze, and called out for Owen to join them. Owen took another draught from one of the many bottles offered by the bystanders, and hastened to obey the summons.

"Stand back now, and don't speak a word," cried the leader, keeping off the anxious crowd that pressed eagerly forward to witness the game; the hushed murmuring of the voices shewing how deeply interested they felt.

The three players bent their heads forward as they sat, while Heffernan spoke some words in a low whisper, to

which the others responded by a muttered assent. "Well, here's success to the undhertakin' anyhow," cried he aloud, and filling out a glass of whisky, drank it off; then passing the liquor to the two others, they followed his example.

"Will ye like to deal, Owen?" said M'Guire; "you're the new-comer, and we'll give ye the choice."

"No, thank ye, boys," said Owen; "do it yerselves, one of ye; I'm sure of fair play."

Heffernan then took the cards, and wetting his thumb for the convenience of better distributing them, slowly laid five cards before each player; he paused for a second before he turned the trump, and in a low voice said: "If any man's faint-hearted, let him say it now ——"

"Turn the card round, and don't be bothering us," cried M'Guire; "one 'ud think we never played a game before."

"Come, be alive," said Owen, in whom the liquor had stimulated the passion for play.

"What's the thrump — is it a diamond? look over and tell us," murmured the crowd nearest the entrance.

"'Tis a spade! — I lay fourpence 'tis a spade!"

"Why wouldn't it be?" said another; "it's the same spade will dig Lucas's grave this night!"

"Look! see!" whispered another, "Owen Connor's won the first thrick! Watch him now! Mind the way he lays the card down, with a stroke of his fist!"

"I wish he wouldn't be drinking so fast!" said another.

"Who won that? who took that thrick?"

"Ould Heffernan, divil fear him! I never see him lose yet."

"There's another; that's Owen's!"

"No; by Jonas! 'tis Luke again has it."

"That's Sam M'Guire's! See how aizy he takes them up."

"Now for it, boys! whisht! here's the last round!" and at this moment, a breathless silence prevailed among the crowd; for while such as were nearest were eagerly bent on observing the progress of the game, the more distant bent their heads to catch every sound that might indicate its fortune.

"See how Luke grins! watch his face!" whispered a low voice. "He doesn't care how it goes, now, he's out

of it!" and so it was. Heffernan had already won two of the five tricks, and was safe whatever the result of the last one. The trial lay between M'Guire and Owen.

"Come, Owen, my hearty!" said M'Guire, as he held a card ready to play, "you or I for it now; we'll soon see which the devil's fondest of. There's the two of clubs for ye!"

"There's the three, then!" said Owen, with a crash of his hand, as he placed the card over the other.

"And there's the four!" said Heffernan, "and the thrick is Sam M'Guire's."

"Owen Connor's lost!" "Owen's lost!" murmured the crowd; and, whether in half-compassion for his defeat, or grief that so hazardous a deed should be entrusted to a doubtful hand, the sensation created was evidently of gloom and dissatisfaction.

"You've a right to take either of us wid ye, Owen," said M'Guire, slapping him on the shoulder. "Luke or myself must go, if ye want us."

"No; I'll do it myself," said Owen, in a low hollow voice.

"There's the tool, then!" said Heffernan, producing

from the breast of his frieze coat a long horse-pistol, the stock of which was mended by a clasp of iron belted round it; "and if it doesn't do its work, 'tis the first time it ever failed. Ould Miles Cregan, of Gurtane, was the last that heard it spake."

Owen took the weapon, and examined it leisurely, opening the pan and settling the priming, with a finger that never trembled. As he drew forth the ramrod to try the barrel, Heffernan said, with a half-grin, "There's two bullets in it, avich!—enough's as good as a feast."

Owen sat still and spoke not, while the leader and Heffernan explained to him the circumstances of the plot against the life of Mr. Lucas. Information had been obtained by some of the party, that the agent would leave Galway on the following evening, on his way to Westport, passing through Oughterarde and their own village, about midnight. He usually travelled in his gig, with relays of horses ready at different stations of the way, one of which was about two miles distant from the old ruin, on the edge of the lake—a wild and dreary spot, where stood a solitary cabin, inhabited by a poor man who earned his livelihood by fishing. No other house was within a mile of

this; and here, it was determined, while in the act of changing horses, the murder should be effected. The bleak common beside the lake was studded with furze and brambles, beneath which it was easy to obtain shelter, though pursuit was not to be apprehended — at least they judged that the servant would not venture to leave his master at such a moment; and as for the fisherman, although not a sworn member of their party, they well knew he would not dare to inform against the meanest amongst them.

Owen listened attentively to all these details, and the accurate directions by which they instructed him on every step he should take. From the moment he should set foot within the cover to the very instant of firing, each little event had its warning.

"Mind!" repeated Heffernan, with a slow, distinct whisper, "he never goes into the house at all; but if the night's cowld — as it's sure to be this sayson — he'll be moving up and down, to keep his feet warm. Cover him as he turns round; but don't fire the first cover, but wait till he comes back to the same place again, and then blaze. Don't stir then, till ye see if he falls: if he does,

be off down the common; but if he's only wounded—but sure ye'll do better than that!"

"I'll go bail he will!" said M'Guire. "Sorra fear that Owen Connor's heart would fail him! and sure if he likes me to be wid him"—

"No, no!" said Owen, in the same hollow voice as before, "I'll do it all by myself; I want nobody."

"'Tis the very words I said when I shot Lambert of Kilclunah!" said M'Guire. "I didn't know him by looks, and the boys wanted me to take some one to point him out. 'Sorra bit!' says I, 'leave that to me;' and so I waited in the gripe of the ditch all day, till, about four in the evening, I seen a stout man wid a white hat coming across the fields, to where the men was planting potatoes. So I ups to him wid a letter in my hand, this way, and my hat off—'Is yer honner Mr. Lambert?' says I. 'Yes,' says he; 'what do ye want with me?' 'Tis a bit of a note I've for yer honner,' says I; and I gav him the paper. He tuck it and opened it; but troth it was little matter there was no writin' in it, for he would'nt have lived to read it through. I sent the ball through his heart, as near as I stand to ye; the wadding

was burning his waistcoat when I left him. 'God save you!' says the men, as I went across the potato-field. 'Save you kindly!' says I. 'Was that a shot we heard?' says another. 'Yes,' says I; 'I was fright'ning the crows;' and sorra bit, but that's a saying they have against me ever since." These last few words were said in a simper of modesty, which, whether real or affected, was a strange sentiment at the conclusion of such a tale.

The party soon after separated, not to meet again for several nights; for the news of Lucas's death would of course be the signal for a general search through the country, and the most active measures to trace the murderer. It behoved them, then, to be more than usually careful not to be absent from their homes and their daily duties for some days at least: after which they could assemble in safety as before.

Grief has been known to change the hair to grey in a single night; the announcement of a sudden misfortune has palsied the hand that held the ill-omened letter; but I question if the hours that are passed before the commission of a great crime, planned and meditated beforehand, do not work more fearful devastation on the human heart, than

all the sorrows that ever crushed humanity. Ere night came, Owen Connor seemed to have grown years older. In the tortured doubtings of his harassed mind he appeared to have spent almost a lifetime since the sun last rose. He had passed in review before him each phase of his former existence, from childhood—free, careless, and happy childhood—to days of boyish sport and revelry; then came the period of his first manhood, with its new ambitions and hopes. He thought of these, and how, amid the humble circumstances of his lowly fortune, he was happy. What would he have thought of him who should predict such a future as this for him? How could he have believed it? And yet the worst of all remained to come. He tried to rally his courage and steel his heart, by repeating over the phrases so frequent among his companions. "Sure, aint I driven to it? is it my fault if I take to this, or theirs that compelled me?" and such like. But these words came with no persuasive force in the still hour of conscience: they were only effectual amid the excitement and tumult of a multitude, when men's passions were high, and their resolutions daring. "It is too late to go back," muttered he, as he arose from the spot, where, awaiting nightfall, he

had lain hid for several hours; "they mustn't call me a coward, any way."

As Owen reached the valley the darkness spread far and near, not a star could be seen; great masses of cloud covered the sky, and hung down heavily, midway upon the mountains. There was no rain; but on the wind came from time to time a drifted mist, which shewed that the air was charged with moisture. The ground was still wet and plashy from recent heavy rain. It was indeed a cheerless night and a cheerless hour; but not more so than the heart of him who now, bent upon his deadly purpose, moved slowly on towards the common.

On descending towards the lake-side, he caught a passing view of the little village, where a few lights yet twinkled, the flickering stars that shone within some humble home. What would he not have given to be but the meanest peasant there, the poorest creature that toiled and sickened on his dreary way! He turned away hurriedly, and with his hand pressed heavily on his swelling heart walked rapidly on. "It will soon be over now," said Owen; he was about to add, with the accustomed piety of his class, "thank God for it," but the words stopped

in his throat, and the dreadful thought flashed on him, "Is it when I am about to shed His creature's blood, I should say this?"

He sat down upon a large stone beside the lake, at a spot where the road came down to the water's edge, and where none could pass unobserved by him. He had often fished from that very rock when a boy, and eaten his little dinner of potatoes beneath its shelter. Here he sat once more, saying to himself as he did so, "'Tis an ould friend, any way, and I'll just spend my last night with him;" for so in his mind he already regarded his condition. The murder effected, he determined to make no effort to escape. Life was of no value to him. The snares of the conspiracy had entangled him, but his heart was not in it.

As the night wore on, the clouds lifted, and the wind, increasing to a storm, bore them hurriedly through the air; the waters of the lake, lashed into waves, beat heavily on the low shore; while the howling blast swept through the mountain-passes, and over the bleak, wide plain, with a rushing sound. The thin crescent of a new moon could be seen from time to time as the clouds rolled

The Ambuscade.

London: Chapman & Hall, 186 Strand.

past: too faint to shed any light upon the earth, it merely gave form to the dark masses that moved before it,

"I will do it here," said Owen, as he stood and looked upon the dark water that beat against the foot of the rock; "here, on this spot."

He sat for some moments with his ear bent to listen, but the storm was loud enough to make all other sounds inaudible; yet, in every noise he thought he heard the sound of wheels, and the rapid tramp of a horse's feet. The motionless attitude, the cold of the night, but more than either, the debility brought on by long fasting and hunger, benumbed his limbs, so that he felt almost unable to make the least exertion, should any such be called for.

He therefore descended from the rock and moved along the road; at first, only thinking of restoring lost animation to his frame, but at length, in a half unconsciousness, he had wandered upwards of two miles beyond the little hovel where the change of horses was to take place. Just as he was on the point of returning, he perceived at a little distance, in front, the walls of a now ruined cabin, once the home of the old smith. Part of

the roof had fallen in, the doors and windows were gone, the fragment of an old shutter alone remained, and this banged heavily back and forwards as the storm rushed through the wretched hut.

Almost without knowing it, Owen entered the cabin, and sat down beside the spot where once the forge-fire used to burn. He had been there, too, when a boy many a time—many a story had he listened to in that same corner; but why think of this now? The cold blast seemed to freeze his very blood—he felt his heart as if congealed within him. He sat cowering from the piercing blast for some time; and at last, unable to bear the sensation longer, determined to kindle a fire with the fragments of the old shutter. For this purpose he drew the charge of the pistol, in which there were three bullets, and not merely two, as Heffernan had told him. Laying these carefully down in his handkerchief, he kindled a light with some powder, and, with the dexterity of one not unaccustomed to such operations, soon saw the dry sticks blazing on the hearth. On looking about he discovered a few sods of turf and some dry furze, with which he replenished his fire, till it gradually became a warm and cheering blaze. Owen now

reloaded the pistol, just as he had found it. There was a sense of duty in his mind to follow out every instruction he received, and deviate in nothing. This done, he held his numbed fingers over the blaze, and bared his chest to the warm glow of the fire.

The sudden change from the cold night-air to the warmth of the cabin soon made him drowsy. Fatigue and watching aiding the inclination to sleep, he was obliged to move about the hut, and even expose himself to the chill blast, to resist its influence. The very purpose on which he was bent, so far from dispelling sleep, rather induced its approach; for, strange as it may seem, the concentration with which the mind brings its powers to bear on any object will overcome all the interest and anxiety of our natures, and bring on sleep from very weariness.

He slept, at first, calmly and peacefully—exhaustion would have its debt acquitted—and he breathed as softly as an infant. At last, when the extreme of fatigue was passed, his brain began to busy itself with flitting thoughts and fancies,—some long-forgotten day of boyhood, some little scene of childish gaiety, flashed across him, and he dreamed of the old mountain-lake, where so often he

watched the wide circles of the leaping trout, or tracked with his eye the foamy path of the wild water-hen, as she skimmed the surface. Then suddenly his chest heaved and fell with a strong motion, for with lightning's speed the current of his thoughts was changed; his heart was in the mad tumult of a faction-fight, loud shouts were ringing in his ears, the crash of sticks, the cries of pain, entreaties for mercy, execrations and threats, rung around him, when one figure moved slowly before his astonished gaze, with a sweet smile upon her lips, and love in her long-lashed eyes. She murmured his name; and now he slept with a low-drawn breath, his quivering lips repeating, "Mary!"

Another and a sadder change was coming. He was on the mountains, in the midst of a large assemblage of wild-looking and haggard men, whose violent speech and savage gestures well suited their reckless air. A loud shout welcomed him as he came amongst them, and a cry of "Here's Owen Connor—Owen at last!" and a hundred hands were stretched out to grasp his, but as suddenly withdrawn, on seeing that his hands were not bloodstained nor gory.

He shuddered as he looked upon their dripping fingers; but he shuddered still more as they called him "Coward!" What he said he knew not; but in a moment they were gathered round him, and clasping him in their arms; and now, his hands, his cheeks, his clothes, were streaked with blood; he tried to wipe the foul stains out, but his fingers grew clotted, and his feet seemed to plash in the red stream, and his savage comrades laughed fiercely at his efforts, and mocked him.

"What am I, that you should clasp me thus?" he cried; and a voice from his inmost heart replied, "A murderer!" The cold sweat rolled in great drops down his brow, while the foam of agony dewed his pallid lips, and his frame trembled in a terrible convulsion. Confused and fearful images of bloodshed and its penalty, the crime and the scaffold, commingled, worked in his maddened brain. He heard the rush of feet, as if thousands were hurrying on, to see him die, and voices that swelled like the sea at midnight. Nor was the vision all unreal: for already two men had entered the hut.

The dreadful torture of his thoughts had now reached its climax, and with a bound Owen sprang from his

sleep, and cried in a shriek of heart-wrung anguish, "No, never — I am not a murderer. Owen Connor can meet his death like a man, but not with blood upon him."

"Owen Connor! Owen Connor, did you say?" repeated one of the two who stood before him; "are you, then, Owen Connor?"

"I am," replied Owen, whose dreams were still the last impression on his mind. "I give myself up; — do what ye will with me; — hang, imprison, or transport me; I'll never gainsay you."

"Owen, do you not know me?" said the other, removing his travelling cap, and brushing back the hair from his forehead.

"No, I know nothing of you," said he, fiercely.

"Not remember your old friend — your landlord's son, Owen?"

Owen stared at him without speaking; his parted lips and fixed gaze evidencing the amazement which came over him.

"You saved my life, Owen," said the young man, horror-struck by the withered and wasted form of the peasant.

"And you have made me this," muttered Owen, as he let fall the pistol from his bosom. "Yes," cried he, with an energy very different from before, "I came out this night, sworn to murder that man beside you—your agent, Lucas; my soul is perjured if my hands are not bloody."

Lucas instantly took a pistol from the breast of his coat, and cocked it; while the ghastly whiteness of his cheek shewed he did not think the danger was yet over.

"Put up your weapon," said Owen, contemptuously. "What would I care for it, if I wanted to take your life? do you think the likes of me has any hould on the world?" and he laughed a scornful and bitter laugh.

"How is this, then?" cried Leslie; "is murder so light a crime that a man like this does not shrink from it?"

"The country," whispered Lucas, "is indeed in a fearful state. The rights of property no longer exist among us. That fellow—because he lost his farm ——"

"Stop, sir!" cried Owen, fiercely; "I will deny nothing of my guilt—but lay not more to my charge than is true. Want and misery have brought me low—

destitution and recklessness still lower — but if I swore to have your life this night, it was not for any vengeance of my own."

"Ha! then there is a conspiracy!" cried Lucas, hastily. "We must have it out of you — every word of it—or it will go harder with yourself."

Owen's only reply was a bitter laugh; and from that moment, he never uttered another word. All Lucas's threats, all Leslie's entreaties, were powerless and vain. The very allusion to becoming an informer was too revolting to be forgiven, and he firmly resolved to brave any and every thing, rather than endure the mere proposal.

They returned to Galway as soon as the post-boys had succeeded in repairing the accidental breakage of the harness, which led to the opportune appearance of the landlord and his agent in the hut; Owen accompanying them without a word or a gesture.

So long as Lucas was present, Owen never opened his lips; the dread of committing himself, or in any way implicating one amongst his companions, deterred him; but when Leslie sent for him, alone, and asked him

the circumstances which led him to the eve of so great a crime, he confessed all — omitting nothing, save such passages as might involve others — and even to Leslie he was guarded on this topic.

The young landlord listened with astonishment and sorrow to the peasant's story. Never till now did he conceive the mischiefs neglect and abandonment can propagate, nor of how many sins mere poverty can be the parent. He knew not before that the very endurance of want can teach another endurance, and make men hardened against the terrors of the law and its inflictions. He was not aware of the condition of his tenantry; he wished them all well off and happy; he had no self-accusings of a grudging nature, nor an oppressive disposition, and he absolved himself of any hardships that originated with "the agent."

The cases brought before his notice rather disposed him to regard the people as wily and treacherous, false in their pledges and unmindful of favours; and many, doubtless, were so; but he never inquired how far their experience had taught them, that dishonesty was the best policy, and that trick and subtlety are the only aids to

the poor man. He forgot, above all, that they had neither examples to look up to, nor imitate, and that when once a people have become sunk in misery, they are the ready tools of any wicked enough to use them for violence, and false enough to persuade them, that outrage can be their welfare; and, lastly, he overlooked the great fact, that in a corrupt and debased social condition, the evils which, under other circumstances, would be borne with a patient trust in future relief, are resented in a spirit of recklessness; and that men soon cease to shudder at a crime, when frequency has accustomed them to discuss its details.

I must not — I dare not dwell longer on this theme. Leslie felt all the accusations of an awakened conscience. He saw himself the origin of many misfortunes — of evils of whose very existence he never heard before. Ere Owen concluded his sad story, his mind was opened to some of the miseries of Ireland; and when he had ended, he cried, "I will live at home with ye, amongst ye all, Owen! I will try if Irishmen cannot learn to know who is their true friend; and while repairing some of my own faults, mayhap I may remedy some of theirs."

"Oh! why did you not do this before I came to my ruin?" cried Owen, in a passionate burst of grief; for the poor fellow all along had given himself up for lost, and imagined, that his own plea of guilt must bring him to the gallows. Nor was it till after much persuasion and great trouble, that Leslie could reconcile him to himself, and assure him, that his own fortunate repentance had saved him from destruction.

"You shall go back to your mountain-cabin, Owen; you shall have your own farm again, and be as happy as ever," said the young man. "The law must deal with those who break it, and no one will go farther than myself to vindicate the law; but I will also try if kindness and fair-dealing will not save many from the promptings of their own hearts, and teach men that, even here, the breach of God's commandments can bring neither peace nor happiness."

My object in this little story being to trace the career of one humble man through the trials and temptations incident to his lot in life, I must not dwell upon the wider theme of national disturbance. I have endeavoured—how weakly, I am well aware—to shew, that

social disorganisation, rather than political grievances, are the source of Irish outrage; that neglect and abandonment of the people on the part of those who stood in the position of friends and advisers towards them, have disseminated evils deeper and greater than even a tyranny could have engendered. But for this desertion of their duties, there had been no loss of their rightful influence, nor would the foul crime of assassination now stain the name of our land. With an educated and resident proprietary, Ireland could never have become what she now is; personal comfort, if no higher motive could be appealed to, would have necessitated a watchful observance of the habits of the people — the tares would have been weeded from the wheat; the evil influence of bad men would not have been suffered to spread its contagion through the land.

Let me not be supposed for a moment as joining in the popular cry against the landlords of Ireland. As regards the management of their estates, and the liberality of their dealings with their tenantry, they are, of course with the exceptions which every country exhibits, a class as blameless and irreproachable as can be found

any where — their real dereliction being, in my mind, their desertion of the people. To this cause, I believe, can be traced every one of the long catalogue of disasters to which Ireland is a prey: the despairing poverty, reckless habits, indifference to the mandates of the law, have their source here. The impassioned pursuit of any political privilege, which they are given to suppose will alleviate the evils of their state, has thrown them into the hands of the demagogue, and banded them in a league, which they assume to be National. You left them to drift on the waters, and you may now be shipwrecked among the floating fragments!

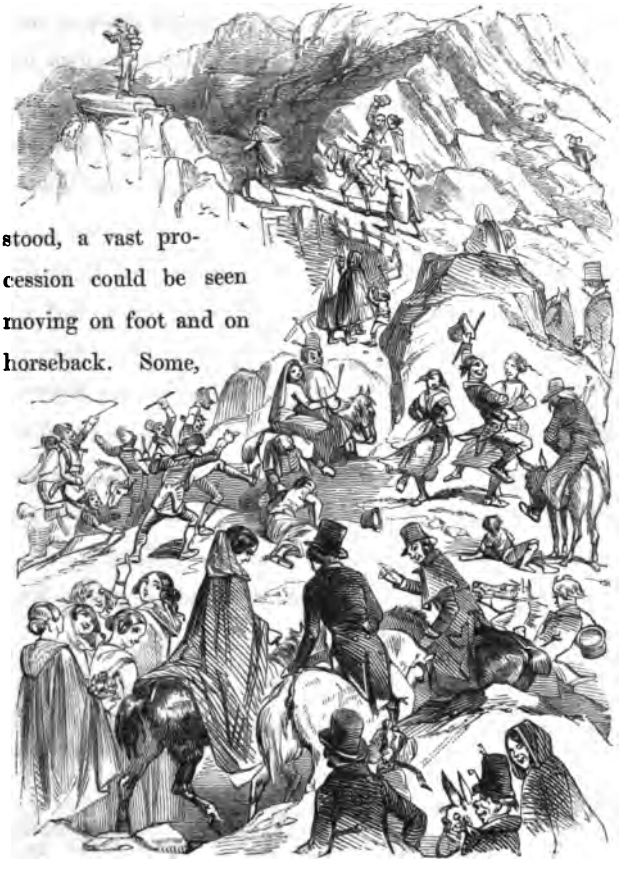
My tale is ended. I have only one record more to add. The exercise of the law, assisted by the energy and determination of a fearless and resident landlord, at length suppressed outrage and banished those who had been its originators. Through the evidence of Gavan Daly, whose treachery had been already suspected, several of the leaders were found guilty, and met the dreadful penalty of their crimes. The fact of an informer having been found amongst them, did, however, far more to break up this unholy league than all the terrors of the law, unassisted

by such aid; but it was long before either peace or happiness shed their true blessings on that land: mutual distrust, the memory of some lost friend, and the sad conviction of their own iniquity, darkened many a day, and made even a gloomier depth than they had ever known in their poverty.

There came, however, a reverse for this. It was a fine day in spring—the mountain and the lake were bright in the sunshine—the valley, rich in the promise of the coming year, was already green with the young wheat—the pleasant sounds of happy labour rose from the fields fresh-turned by the plough—the blue smoke curled into thin air from many a cabin, no longer mean-looking and miserable as before, but with signs of comfort around, in the trim hedge of the little garden and the white walls that glistened in the sun.

Towards the great mountain above the lake, however, many an eye was turned from afar, and many a peasant lingered to gaze upon the scene which now marked its rugged face.

Along the winding path which traced its zigzag course from the lake-side to the little glen where Owen's cabin



stood, a vast procession could be seen moving on foot and on horseback. Some,

in country cars, assisted up the steep ascent by men's strong

shoulders; others, mounted in twos and threes upon some slow-footed beast; but the great number walking, or rather, clambering their way—for in their eagerness to get forward, they, each moment, deserted the path to breast the ferny mountain-side. The scarlet cloaks of the women, as they fluttered in the wind, and their white caps, gave a brilliancy to the picture, which, as the masses emerged from the depth of some little dell and disappeared again, had all the semblance of some gorgeous panorama. Nor was eye the only sense gladdened by the spectacle—for even in the valley could be heard the clear ringing laughter as they went along, and the wild cheer of merriment that ever and anon burst forth from happy hearts, while, high above all, the pleasant sounds of the bagpipe rose, as, seated upon an ass, and entrusted to the guidance of a boy, the musician moved along; his inspiriting strains taken advantage of at every spot of level ground, by some merry souls, who would not "lose so much good music."

As the head of the dense column wound its way upward, one little group could be seen by those below, and were saluted by many a cheer and the waving of hand-

kerchiefs. These were a party, whose horses and gear seemed far better than the rest; and among them rode a gentleman mounted on a strong pony,—his chief care was bestowed less on his own beast, than in guiding that of a young country girl, who rode beside him. She was enveloped in a long blue cloak of dark cloth, beneath which she wore a white dress; a white ribbon floated through her dark hair, too; but in her features and the happy smile upon her lip, the bride was written more palpably than in all these.

High above her head, upon a pinnacle of rock, a man stood, gazing at the scene; at his side a little child of some four or five years old, whose frantic glee seemed perilous in such a place, while his wild accents drew many an upward glance from those below, as he cried—

"See, Nony, see! Mary is coming to us at last!"

This, too, was a "St. Patrick's Eve," and a happy one.—May Ireland see many such!

The End.

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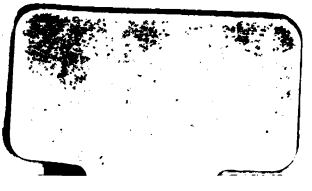

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